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No 354

A TALE OF THE OLDEN DAYS.

BY MARCO G. ROLFE.

'Tis a song of the days that are gone—
Of the deeds of a knight of old,
With a sword as bright as the stars,
And a burnished helmet of gold.
He was known as the Knight of La Ronne,
And he loved a fair maid of old,
With blue eyes as bright as the stars,
And hair as rich gleaming as gold.
Who was known as the Lady De Nonne.
But there was a bold Knight of the Plain,
Who loved the fair Lady De Nonne,
With a love not tender and true
As that of the Knight of La Ronne;
But he'd pledged him again and again,
He'd wed the fair Lady De Nonne,
Whose love was so tender and true
For the valiant Knight of La Ronne,
Though his hands in his gore he must stain!
They chanced to meet one day in the wood,
When the heart of each knight was bold,
And two swords as bright as the stars
Rung flashing on helmets of gold!
In the shade of a dark copse, there stood
A maiden with heart growing cold,
With blue eyes as bright as the stars,
And hair as rich gleaming as gold,
Who was watching the fight in the wood.
The arm of the bold Knight of the Plain
Was stouter than that of his foe,
And he beat down his trusty sword,
And, wounding him, quick laid him low.
Then dismounted to wound him again!
Then came the fair Lady De Nonne
And threw herself under the blade,
All red with the blood of La Ronne;
It fell—and the true maiden was slain!

SURE SHOT SETH. The Boy Rifleman:

OR,
THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DA-
KOTA DAN," "OLD DAN BACKBACK," ETC.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE HUT.

For fully a minute a speechless silence reigned in the Hermit Hut, the savages eying the boys, and the latter exchanging glances with one and another. Had the red-skins entered the door as had been their wont in days past, the boys would not have mistrusted them of murderous designs. But their war-paint, and every feature of the face, and the black fore-eyes, bespoke the evil, murderous purpose in their hearts.

Sure Shot Seth was the first to speak. "Why does our red friends not come in at the door as they used to?" he asked, calmly. "Why do the pale-face boys stand a guard near the door?" was the savage spokesman's reply; "they didn't use to do this."

Seth was puzzled for an answer to this savage retort. The fact of their having placed one of their number on guard outside was evidence of their fears of danger, for not once in the two years past had they ever been compelled to take this precaution.

"We placed a guard near the door," Seth finally answered, "because we have heard that the Indians and whites have dug up the hatchet and were going to war with each other."

"And are not the trapper-boys of the Hermit Hut the friends of the whites?" asked the savage, with a sardonic smile.

"We are the friends of all—both red and white. The red-skins have broken bread with us as often as the whites since we came to the Hermit Hut. If there is trouble between the Sioux and the whites, we can be neutral."

"The white boy's tongue is crooked. He knows he will fight the Sioux. When he came into the cabin, we were on the top of his wigwam and heard him talk."

In an instant all flashed through the boy's mind. During their absence the Indians had climbed to the roof of the cabin, and were there concealed when they came in. They saw there was no compromising with them—that a conflict was inevitable.

The Brigade had deposited all their rifles in one corner, and edging around by degrees, the savages managed to get themselves between the boys and the guns, believing that they were in possession of no other weapons. But in this the red-skins were mistaken. Each of the boys was possessed of a small revolver, and which, at close quarters, would be the most desirable weapon. The youths felt no fears of the number that confronted them; but that others might be waiting outside to join them in case of a collision.

The savages were armed with the deadliest weapons—the tomahawk and scalping-knife. But none of them were drawn, and a movement of a hand to the belt would be a signal for the boys to precipitate the conflict.

Each boy was actuated as if by a single impulse. The threatened danger forced measures in common upon each mind; and having exchanged glances with their leader, all stood ready to fire the first shot ever fired in anger, or with deadly intent upon a human being.

It was a momentous hour in the lives of the young Brigade—started from the sweet, rapturous enjoyment of music into the presence of death. Yet they faced the savages—great, powerful, athletic fellows that they were—with a cool, calm determination that in a measure averted the sanguine audacity of the Sioux.

For half a minute a lull—such as precedes the violence of the storm—fell upon the two



"I'm in at roll-call, too. Sound the reveille, beat the drum, and rat-tat-too, for day has broke."

lines of enemies, though each form seemed to tremble with the emotions that were pent up within it.

Seth had, adroitly, yet without any apparent motion whatever, transferred his hands to his breeches pockets, in the right of which he always carried his revolvers, it being more convenient.

His friends saw this movement, and comprehended its meaning at once, though it never entered the Indians' brains that his movement was other than a manifestation of peace; and as the youth's companions assumed positions and attitudes that brought their right hands in juxtaposition with their revolvers, a savage spoke:

"We will not kill the boy trappers if they will go quietly as prisoners to the village of Little Crow."

"We haven't the least assurance of this," answered Seth, "for we have found the Sioux to be treacherous as the moccasin snake."

"For these words shall the pale-face boy die," replied the chief, unloosing his tomahawk. But, before he could release the weapon, the hand of the young trapper-boy was withdrawn from his pocket and extended toward the savage's face. There was a flash and report simultaneously, and the warrior, with a deep groan of horrible pain, started back; his face contorted with agony and his muscles quivering, he fell like an ox upon the floor. A round hole in his forehead bearing the black powder-marks around its edges told where the unerring bullet had struck.

This was a signal for a general attack and the clash of five other revolvers rung out sharp and stunning on the night. Every savage went down before the deadly weapons, and victory seemed but the labor of an instant for our

friends; but in the moment of their bloodless triumph, a fiendish yell outside the door burst from the lips of a score of red-skins; the door was flung open, and the yelling demons rushed into the cabin like a tornado.

Turning on his heel, as the door burst from its hinges, Sure Shot Seth fired at the candle, snuffing out the light as completely as though done by a gust of wind!

Then the revolvers of the boy-trappers were turned toward the door, and a constant stream of fire flashed in the faces of the savages. The groans of the dying wretches were mingled with the crack of the revolvers, the sudden fall of heavy bodies, and the tumbling of the excited savages over their fallen comrades as they rushed into the darkened room.

The boy-trappers gradually edged around toward the door leading into the opposite room; and as each one emptied the last chamber of his revolver, he passed out into the adjacent apartment. Not a word escaped the lips of our young friends, and one by one their revolvers became silenced; but whether it was by death or by being emptied, each could tell nothing regarding his comrade.

The danger was not all on the side of the savages, for the moment the light was put out, they began throwing their tomahawks, clubs and knives in every direction; and their clash and thud fell thick as hail against the walls. But the confusion was so great and deafening that the savages could tell nothing of the result of their attack.

Finally the tumult became hushed; a light was obtained by the savages; and then it was that they beheld the terrible loss they had already sustained. Maddened by the sight of their dead braves they sought the foe in the adjoining room, but the scene of battle had

been transferred to the open air. In front of the cabin the boy-trappers met a number of savages as they passed out, and here another conflict ensued.

"Boys," cried Sure Shot Seth, "make for the woods!—every fellow for himself!"

A moment later there seemed to be a perceptible pause in the struggle as the sound of the conflict spread out in all directions, and yells of savage vengeance rung through the forest. By these sounds, Sure Shot Seth knew that his men had obeyed orders, and that all the survivors were seeking safety by flight to the woods. But how many had fallen! This was the question that now rose in the young trapper's mind as he pursued his lonely way through the dark and gloomy wilderness. When assured that he had eluded his pursuers, Seth stopped and sat down upon a log.

All noise of the late conflict was left behind, and unbroken silence pervaded the night, and gradually animated nature began her myriad of sounds, and soon the great lungs of the sleeping world were sending forth their pulsing, throbbing respirations.

Sure Shot Seth grew easier now. He knew by the sounds that came to his ear that no danger was lurking near. The acute ear of the experienced woodsman can read the voices of nature as though spoken in an intelligible dialect. Through force of habit he becomes accustomed to his surroundings, and intuitively learns by instinct the language of both animate and inanimate nature, for inanimate nature has a language, and one that never deceives. The chirp of a cricket, the hum of insect wings, the piping of a tree-frog, and the patter of the velvet feet of night-prowling beasts, all mingle and produce a weird, monotonous drone that instinctively inspires one with a feeling of soli-

tude; and this feeling assures him that no enemies, or friends, for that matter, are moving about. On the contrary, if all is silent and drear, it is a warning that danger lurks near—that, conscious of the murderous intent of the skulker, nature hushes her song.

It was the assurance that no danger lurked near that gave Seth relief; and when satisfied that he could do so with impunity, he gave utterance to the sharp bark of the fox.

Instantly he was answered in a similar manner from among the hills.

"Reynard, the Fox, lives," the young leader said; then he uttered the cry of the beaver, and was answered.

Then changing his position, he gave utterance to the scream of a panther, the howl of a wolf, the hoot of an owl, and the cry of a whippoorwill. All answered but one.

"As I live!" soliloquized Seth, "the boys all answered but the Indian, Le Subtile Wolf. Can it be that he has been slain?"

Hoosah was a brave and fearless youth, with but little of the savage in his nature. He was a Chippewa by birth, and had spent all his days among the whites, coming from northern Michigan when quite a lad; so there was no danger to apprehend of his want of fidelity to the whites. Seth was satisfied that he had either been killed or else had not heard his call. He did not repeat it through fear of confusion, or of increasing their danger.

Moving further back into the woods, Seth finally sat down in a dense thicket of shrubbery, leaned against a tree and went to sleep. This was not a very commendable act for a borderman, but Seth knew that no danger could befall him there in such a lonely and desolate spot. Moreover, he was almost exhausted with his night's adventure, and nothing but sleep could restore the much-needed strength, and drive away the dizzy whirl of the brain.

It was just growing light when he awoke. He could see the dusky outline of the tree-trunks around him, and leaning against one of these, motionless as the tree itself, he saw the outlines of an Indian warrior!

CHAPTER VI.

A QUEER OLD CUSTOMER.

Seth started to his feet, half bewildered and half terrified at sight of the savage standing over him.

To his surprise, however, he saw that the Indian did not move, and a second thought and second glance removed a terrible weight from the youth's mind; for he now recognized the red-skin as his friend, Hoosah, or Le Subtile Wolf. The Indian lad was standing there asleep. It was the way a Chippewa slept on the war-path.

Seth glanced around him, and on the opposite side of the same tree against which he had reclined he saw the form of Justin Gray, the Beaver, curled up in a sound slumber; and under another tree not far away he saw the form of Black Pan, the African, stretched at full length along the ground.

Seth gave utterance to the shrill cry of a bird, then in a clear voice called out:

"Le Subtile Wolf!"

"Ugh! me here," muttered the lad, starting from his slumber.

"Justin Gray?"

"Here."

"Tim Tricks?"

"Here I is, ole boss."

"Baldwin Judd?"

"Here," came from in the bushes.

"Teddy O'Rourke?"

"Here, bedad."

"Mort Schultz?"

"I here ish."

And as each one answered to his name, he emerged from among the shadows and stood before his young leader, Sure Shot Seth.

"Thank God, we are all permitted to meet again," said Seth.

This was the point designated as a rendezvous before leaving the cabin when the savages were pouring in upon them; hence the remarkable manner under which they all met.

Two of the boys bore severe wounds, but these had been bandaged, and in the joy experienced over their escape they felt no pain.

The marks of a restless night, and of excitement, were upon each face; yet no look, word or movement betrayed the least sign of fear. Nobly had the youths fought their way through a terrible danger, and now as they stood congratulating each other on their miraculous escape—while the red dawn of the rosy morn was bursting into light around them, a shrill, sharp voice suddenly cried out:

"Here!"

The boys started as though a torpedo had exploded in their midst. They glanced around them, then at one another, a look of wild astonishment upon each face.

"Here!" again shouted the unknown voice, and the sound was followed by an outburst of rollicking laughter.

It came from overhead, and raising their eyes, the young bordermen saw that which forced an involuntary exclamation from their lips. Attached to a limb of the wide-spreading oak was a sort of a rude hammock made of a blanket, and over the end of this the quaint, comical face of an old man looked down upon them.

He was about twenty or thirty feet above them, and his hammock was attached to a

limb that grew straight out from the body of the tree, yet slender enough to give it a gentle, swaying motion.

This old stranger was a man of nearly three-score years; yet the bright luster of his mischievous gray eyes, and the smile upon his thin, bearded face, told of a youthful, buoyant spirit. His nose was of a strong Roman type—a type indicative of indomitable courage. Considerable severity was betrayed in the thin lips, yet the general features of the man were the embodiment of humor, eccentricity and drollery.

"I'm in at roll-call, too," he exclaimed, in a whimsical tone; "sound the reveille, beat the drum, and rat-tat-too, for day has broke, the birds are astir, and the devil's to pay."

"Will, now!" exclaimed Teddy O'Roop, "and what fur a baste have we got there now?"

"Hello, boggy-tongue," answered the man, with a comical smile, as he turned over on his stomach in his hammock and gazed complacently down upon the Brigade, while he kicked up his heels like a listless schoolboy lying in the shade.

"I should think you could see that I'm not a 'possum up here; nor that I'm not an oriole in a hangin' nest, but a full-fledged rooster of the genus man who roosts high and dry."

"We observe that you are rather elevated in your ideas of repose," said Seth.

"Elevated, did ye say?" replied the man; "Jews and Gentiles! that's no name for it. It's perfectly delicious up here. You see, I've slept around on the yearth with bugs, and snakes, and tortles, and bears, and wolves, and Indians, and snails, and alligators, crawling over and sniffin' round me long enough; and so I come to the conclusion that I'd hang myself up in a tree after'ds; and I find it's delicious swaying in the breeze while the beasts of the field roam beneath, and the birds of the air sail above me. I'm old Joyful Jim Tucker, a sail above me. I'm old Joyful Jim Tucker, a sail above me. I'm old Joyful Jim Tucker, a sail above me."

The man stepped out upon a limb, unfettered his hammock, took a rifle and its accoutrements from among the thick foliage above his head, and then descended to the ground. He shook hands with the boys all around, then said:

"S'pose you chaps are on the war-path?"

"Can't say that we are, exactly, though we had quite a fight last night with savages at our cabin, and were routed, though we lost no men."

"You don't mean to say that you compose Sure Shot Seth's Boy Brigade, that's been ranchin' at the Hermit Hut?" exclaimed Joyful Jim.

"We're the Boy Brigade," answered Seth.

"Judas and Benedict Arnold! Why, boys, I war just on my way to your ranch."

"From where?"

"Minnesota in general; you see I've been doin' a little tradin' up here 'mong the Ingins for the past few years. I've been tradin' 'em beads, pocket-knives and 'doctored water,' for peltries; but as they've dug up the hatchet, I concluded to make myself seldom in their midst, and so pointed nose for the Hermit Hut. And so they've routed you hose and foot!"

"They came upon us ten to one."

"They did! Wal, then, there's no denyin' blood and war are upon us; and so I purpose to have a hand in it. If the critters hadn't confiscated all my stock, I'd been easier out 'em; but now I purpose to let 'em know that I wern't eddicated in the city. I'll jist sail right into 'em, boot and toe-nail, and I'll bet the fust Ingins I'll tackle'll hear som'thin' gurgle."

"Faith, and wouldn't somethin' gurgle if yeess should tackle a jug av poteen, Joyful Jimmie, eh now?" said Teddy.

"Irishman, do you take me for a drunkard? Do you s'pose I had a gallon of 'oh-be-joyful' that I wouldn't let you have half of it? What do you take me for, anyhow?"

"Yow-oo-o!" suddenly rung in a low quavering echo through the woods.

Every boy started as if shot.

"It is Le Subtle Wolf," said Seth, who, for the first time, noticed the absence of the Indian from their midst; "it means danger."

"Then s'pose we obscure ourselves," suggested the trader, and the party at once concealed themselves, Joyful Jim selecting a thicket some distance from the boys. They had scarcely done so ere a savage in war-paint came stealing slyly as a panther through the woods, his eyes and ears on the alert, and his body bent slightly forward as if to give intensity to the precaution he was observing.

Joyful Jim, who was not concealed from the Brigade entirely, turned and glanced toward the boys with a comic grimace and a wink, and shook his head as if ready to burst with suppressed laughter.

"Och, and the owl bla'gard'll not keep still," said Teddy, in a whisper.

"No danger of his betraying us," returned Seth; "I think he can be trusted."

The red-skin advanced slowly, cautiously. He was pursuing a course that, if continued, would take him within two paces of the trader, and our young friends experienced no little uneasiness for the old man's safety. They could see the trader as he stood erect behind the shrubbery, his hands outstretched before him as if to part the bushes.

The savage stole on, and when opposite the thicket he was started with all the sudden fright and ferocity of a surprised tiger. He turned his head and saw the bushes part before him, and the face of the fearless old Joyful Jim appear in the opening.

"Howdy!—mornin' to ye, red-skin!" exclaimed the trader, with a desperate grin.

The savage started back with a grunt, while a look of demonic ferocity mounted his painted face. His hand sought the knife at his girdle, but before he could use it, the bony fist of the trader shot through the shrubbery, and striking the warrior in the face, felled him to the earth. Then with a shout, the old man sprung from his covert upon the savage and engaged him in a hand-to-hand struggle. The battle waxed warm and desperate, but in the hottest of the contest the red-skin gave a wild yell, that was immediately answered by a dozen friends, not far distant; and the next moment eight or ten warriors came darting through the woods toward the scene of battle.

"Let them have it, boys!" exclaimed Seth; "we're in for another fight."

Scarcely had he spoken ere the rifles of the Boy Brigade rung out on the clear morning air, and half of the advancing savages fell dead.

CHAPTER VII.

GIVING THE RED-SKINS "FITS."

THE instant the Boy Brigade fired, those of the red-skins that did not fall dodged behind the nearest trees and at once opened a sort of a desultory fire. The boys, however, had also revealed themselves of the cover of trees, and while they could render Joyful Jim no assistance in his struggle, they resolved that no assistance should come to his antagonist. There was little danger of old Jim receiving a shot

from the savages under cover, for the rapid evolutions of the two made it dangerous to friend as well as foe, to fire upon them. The only hopes of each party lay in keeping the other at bay until the contest should be settled between the two combatants themselves.

Sure Shot Seth was without a gun, but with a pistol in hand, kept an eye on the enemy, the nearest of whom were not eighty yards away.

Joyful Jim and his antagonist seemed to have taken each other at a disadvantage, and so labored in the conflict. In rapid evolutions they whirled in each other's embrace. The hold of each was exactly the same. The old trader's right arm pinioned the savage's left, and the savage's right pinioned the old man's left. Jim, however, finally succeeded in getting hold of the red-skin's long scalp-lock, which hung down his back; and by pulling severely upon this appendage, drew the savage's head back in such a manner as to render him almost helpless. The savage uttered a hoarse, rattling cry when he saw that his foe was gaining upon him, and his cry reaching the ears of his friends, created a lively stir among them. By every device known to their cunning brains they tried to draw the Brigade from its covert. But they had met their match, and failed in every attempt.

Meanwhile, firing was heard in the woods some distance to the south, and that Hoosah, the young Chippewa, was in trouble, the Brigade had not a doubt; but none of them dared attempt to leave, for every tree that concealed one of them was marked by a savage eye and covered by a savage rifle.

Finally, however, the Indians saw that their friend was getting the worst of the conflict, and that something must be done. With a yell that might have intimidated less brave hearts than those of the Boy Brigade, the Sioux dashed from their covert and darted toward the combatants, reeling as they ran, to avert the bullets of the enemy.

But the Boy Brigade was ready for any emergency, and having discharged their rifles, bounded from their concealment and met the foe by the two struggling combatants, over whom a desperate conflict ensued.

The Boy Brigade now had an opportunity to call into practical use their skillful, athletic training; and right lively did they exert themselves—leaping, whirling and darting through the air so rapidly and swiftly that the eye could scarcely follow their movements.

Teddy O'Roop, as he came up near the red-skins, turned a complete hand-spring and shot himself forward with such force that his feet, coming in contact with a savage's stomach, sent him breathless to the earth.

Baldwin Judd, or Reynard, the Fox, leaped into the air over a savage's head and planted his feet in the red-skin's face with great violence, while Tim Tricks, the darkey, dropped his bullet-head, shot forward as if ejected from a catapult, and drove it into the stomach of a red-skin, doubling him up on the spot.

Taken thus, the red-skins were unprepared to meet the flying enemy, as it were. They were completely confused and astounded by the flying, whirling, darting, tumbling forms around them. Heads, heads, fists and forms shot hither and thither in dizzy confusion; and ere the red-skins were aware of the fact, the Boy Brigade was master of the situation. Two of the savages had been slain, and the rest knocked breathless to the earth and secured before they could offer resistance.

By this time Joyful Jim had ended the conflict between himself and the savage, and had come out victor without even a wound of any consequence.

The firing heard a few minutes previous had ceased, and the shout of victory that rung from Old Jim's lips was answered by another from the lips of Hoosah, the Indian lad, who, at this juncture, came bounding into the midst of his friends, followed by a strange lad and brandishing above his head a Sioux scalp.

"Great shockin'!" exclaimed Old Jim, "here's this bloody Turk with a red-skin scalp. Who says you can civilize or tame an Ingins?"

"It's an Indian's nature to scalp, and I presume you can't preach it out of him," said Sure Shot Seth; "but who have you here, Hoosah?" and he turned to the white lad accompanying him.

"Ed Thornly," answered the youth himself.

"Ed Thornly? Haven't I seen you at Yellow Medicine?"

"Yes; I reside there; you are Sure Shot Seth, I believe?"

"The same," answered our hero.

"Then my mission is at an end, though I thought for awhile the Indians had ended it this morning for me when they captured me. Thanks to your red friend here I was liberated."

"Then you were on your way to the Hermit Hut?"

"Yes—totally ignorant of the fact that the Indians had begun their depredations. But I am here to see you, Seth, on a little matter concerning us boys at the Agency. To-morrow we are to have a shooting-match there for boys. A fine rifle is to be the prize. There is some rivalry between Tom Grayson and Ivan Le Clercq, the two best shots at the place; but on the part of the latter it is not a friendly rivalry. He has already resorted to foul means to defeat Tom, whose majority of the people like. By the mean advantage already gained, it is feared that Le Clercq will win, so we boys held a meeting and concluded to send for you, and have you take some of the conceit and self-arrogance out of that fellow. I have a request here, signed by nearly all the boys in the Agency, for you to come down and scoop Le Clercq out."

Seth's eyes brightened as Ed presented him the paper upon which were a number of names. It was a concession to his superior marksmanship, and he felt proud of the honor thus conferred upon him by the Agency boys. He could, under no circumstances, decline, and expressed his surprise at the honor bestowed upon him, and promised Ed that he would be on hand at the shooting-match.

"I'll teach your friend, Ivan, a lesson he has never learned in handling firearms," he said, "and, as I am without a rifle now, it will be a kind of a Godsend to get a new one. Yes, you can tell Tom Grayson that I'll be there."

The whole band now moved southward, accompanied by Ed Thornly and Joyful Jim, the reputed Indian trader.

That night they encamped ten miles from the Agency. Ed Thornly went on home alone, but under cover of the darkness.

Bright and early the next morning Sure Shot Seth left the Brigade and set out for Yellow Medicine to fulfill his engagement at the shooting-match.

Shortly after his departure the Brigade struck a fresh Indian trail leading toward the south-west, and feeling fully satisfied that the enemy were upon the war-path, they set off in pursuit of the foe—upon their first war-trail.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 353.)

A MOTHER'S MEMORIES.

BY HARRIET FETHER WARNER.

When within my chamber lonely,
How my thoughts doth backward roam,
O'er the years that swiftly vanished,
Since I was a child at home.

In the silence, sadly brooding,
O'er the sorrow-freighted years,
How I sigh for Lethe's dark waters,
And forgetfulness of tears!

Yet the wish is scarce half uttered,
Ere my memory doth recall
Some white stars out of life's darkness,
Like fair lilies on Death's pall.

First, a mother's fond caresses,
Rained upon a childish face;
And a father's deep affection,
That stern time can not efface.

Some kind words by true friends uttered,
That through years are treasured up,
That dilute the gall and wormwood,
When I drink of sorrow's cup.

Yet a brighter star is shining,
Fairer, dearer, than the rest,
That came like glimpses of Heaven,
And made Earth a region blest.

But the gem was only given,
That, though weary, I may know
That a treasure never fades,
Waits to heal a mother's woe.

Think ye, if I could forget them—
Parents' love, and friendships dear?
Or the clasp of baby finger,
Were each day a weary year?

No! I shun Lethe's fabled waters,
While my memory backward flies,
For those stars will safely guide me
To my rest beyond the skies!

BIG GEORGE.

The Giant of the Gulch.

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE VOLCANO, THE BOY MINER," "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "PAOITIC PETE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BEAUTIFUL FURY.

TERIBLY beautiful was Clarina as she drew her queenly form erect, her countenance glowing, her eyes blazing with an angry triumph; but it was with the beauty of a fallen angel. Even in that moment Big George felt a glow of admiration thrill through his being, a sensation something akin to the old passionate ardor of days gone by. But it lasted only for an instant. Then the memory of a fair, pure face returned with redoubled force as he caught the full meaning of her exultant speech.

"You will never again breathe your love-words in her ears. She is dead! And I killed her!" repeated the beautiful fury, in a clear, ringing tone.

"You—but it is a lie—a shallow lie on its face!" cried Big George, suffering his uplifted hand to sink to his side. "She is safe in Red's hands, and I'll take good care that you never have the chance to trouble her. From this hour our paths run separate. You can stay here or go—just as you prefer; but whichever you elect, I and mine will take the other course. I have more than fulfilled my bargain with you so far. There is nothing you can blame me with—"

"Nothing, George?" cried Clarina, her tone and attitude changing as by magic, from hard and defiant to soft and reproachful. "Do you call it nothing? You teach me to love you better than all the world beside, better than my very soul; then you turn aside with a careless laugh, tossing my heart from you as you might a crushed and faded flower, saying—go, I have done with you! And this you call nothing? Oh, George—say that you do not mean it—say that you have only been trying your power over me. You cannot mean it. I love you—Merciful Mother! how I love you! I would die if I thought you hated me! Say that you were only trying me—that you still love me, if only a little!"

Sinking at his feet, she clasped his knees, looking beseechingly into his face as she pleaded; but the cold, hard look did not soften, nor the black frown fade from his face.

"Say that you lied about her—that she is yet alive and well, for all that you have done," he uttered, sternly.

"And if I do—if I admit that I was mad and hardly knew what I was saying, will you recall those dreadful words? Will you promise to be satisfied with my love, and try to forget that she ever lived?"

Big George laughed with insolent triumph.

"That is all I want to know. I was pretty sure that you were trying to deceive me, from the first; but so many queer things have happened during the last few days that I didn't know but this was another one of them. There—you'd better get up. I know how such acting tires one, from sad experience."

"Acting!" cried Clarina, springing to her feet.

"So I said. I thought that would be the proper way to put it, to spare your modesty. Come, Clarina, this is growing tiresome. Surely I have spoken plain enough for even you to understand. The past is dead, so far as you and I are concerned, and it is worse than folly to keep raking over the cold ashes. I tell you once for all that there is not a single spark of my old love left alive—"

He never finished the sentence. With a sharp, agonized cry, the Spanish woman sprang toward him, striking madly at his heart with her dagger. Quick as were his motions, Big George could not stay her hand until the keen point of the weapon penetrated his clothes and pierced his skin. The stinging pain enraged him, and for the moment he forgot that he was dealing with a woman. Uttering a furious curse, he struck her with his clenched fist. Luckily the force with which he wrested the poniard from her grasp, caused Clarina to reel, and thus she avoided the full force of the blow, which would otherwise have maimed if not slain her outright. As it was, she was hurled across the room, falling heavily in the corner. Then, without a second glance at his victim, Big George strode out of the room and rejoined his two brothers. Paying no heed to their questions, he seized one of the decanters, and raising it to his lips, drank long and deeply of the fiery liquor.

Scarcely had he disappeared when Clarina arose to her feet. Her face was very pale, and all passion seemed to have vanished, save from her eyes. They burned with a vivid fire painful to witness.

Arranging her disordered garments, Clarina picked up the dagger from the floor where Big George had flung it, then opened a drawer in the bureau from which she took a quantity of gold-studs and some jewels. These she secured upon her person. Then, after one slow glance around her, as though bidding a long farewell to the home which had sheltered her for so long, she opened the door and passed out into the night. Once she paused. Through the open door of the rude brush-walled hut, she could see the forms of the three brothers, gathered around the table. One moment her gaze

rested upon the massive figure of George Pepper; then she gazed silently away toward the entrance of the gulch.

Leon, the Mexican, was on guard, with the best of the mine laborers. A low, cautious note upon her ivory call brought him to her side.

"I am going away from this, Leon," she said, in a low, cold tone. "You will follow me. But first, pass the word to my men. Tell them that their work here is completed, that I, their queen, say so. Bid them make all haste to join me at San Felipe—the old mission. There is work for them on hand—work that will repay them richly. There—that will do."

"That need not concern you; you have only to obey my orders. But that there may be no trouble, act cautiously. They are at the liquors now, and will not be easily disturbed. If they should, and attempt to stop you—well, you have weapons and should know how to use them."

"Holy Mother be praised!" fervently muttered the Mexican, as Clarina glided away. "There has been a quarrel with the cursed heretics! If it may only last forever!"

Clambering over the barricade, Clarina emerged from the gulch, and rapidly glided down the valley, nor did she pause to cast one glance behind her. In silence she hastened on through the night, seemingly insensible to fatigue, though the trail was a difficult one, at times almost impassable.

It was fully three hours before she paused, upon the brow of a rocky hill. Taking breath for a few moments, she raised the whistle to her lips and blew a long, trilling blast, then sank down upon a moss-grown boulder. She had not long to wait. Almost immediately a huge figure strode up the hill and bowed its head before her.

"Prompt and faithful as ever, Manuel; you at least I can trust. Well, did you succeed?" Another low bow was the only reply.

"Good! Now listen. There is work on hand. We will need every arm. You must set the signals for them to gather at the mission at once. You understand?"

"Si, senora," bowed the man, moving away in obedience to the gesture.

Arising, Clarina descended the hill, crossed a level tract of land and found herself at the door of a gloomy-looking stone building—one of the ruined missions, long since abandoned by the priests who sought to convert the savages to the true cross faith, and the same to which Estelle Mack had been borne a captive, some four-and-twenty hours previously.

In obedience to her signal, the door was opened to her by the old woman. Clarina took the torch and key to the dungeon door, bidding the old woman return to her couch, and proceeded alone. It was her footstep that Estelle heard, the light of her torch flashing upon her vision after so long a spell of utter darkness that caused her to cover her face with her hands to shut out the blinding light.

Clarina entered, closing the door behind her. She thrust the torch into a crevice in the wall, then stood over the captive, touching her with the tip of one foot, saying in a sharp tone:

"Look up! I am anxious to see what there is in your face to drive men mad and cause them to forget their most solemn vows—look up, I say!"

Estelle obeyed, and a low, glad cry broke from her lips as she saw that a woman stood before her.

"You are a woman—you have come to save me! Oh, let me go from here—help me to escape, and I will bless and pray for you! He was calling for me, and they would not let me go—for the love of God! take me to him!"

Clarina laughed bitterly, as she thrust the kneeling figure from her with her foot.

"A woman—yes, I was a woman, once; but not now. I am a devil; and you made me one—you and him. As well pray to these stone walls—they will listen to your pleadings with a better grace than I, and answer them far sooner. Take you to him! I would sooner tear the heart from my bosom with my own fingers! Ay! look at me, look well. Am I so hideous? Am I old and withered? Is my figure deformed, my voice discordant? What is there in you that I lack? Nothing! And yet—he has scorned me for love of you!"

Terrified by the angry look, bewildered by the frenzied speech of the jealous woman, Estelle shrank back, trembling in every fiber, murmuring:

"I do not understand—"

"A lie! You know only too well—but you shall not live to boast of your triumph over me. Do I look like one who would tamely submit to such an affront, an injury so bitter? No, no! You have had your triumph; you must pay the penalty. I told him that I had killed you. I lied then, but I will make my words good now. Bah! and she laughed scornfully as Estelle uttered a low cry of terror. "There are none to hear you; and even if there were, I am queen over all. I would only have to lift my finger, and your dainty limbs would be torn asunder. Not that I would give that signal; no, no! That would be poor revenge; to see you die by another's hand instead of mine. And then, there are worse punishments than death. He has scorned and insulted me. You shall meet the same fate. He loves you for your sweet baby face. I will spoil that soft beauty—leave it scarred and hideous. I will pull out your silken hair—perhaps he has toyed with it—even kissed it! Mother of Mercy—I am choking! I am dying—the thought kills me!" and clutching at her throat, Clarina reeled as though she would fall.

Instinctively Estelle sprang to her aid, seeing only a sister woman in agony; but as though her touch was magic, Clarina rallied, grasping the girl and flinging her prostrate, raising her poniard to deal the fatal stroke!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PUT TO THE TEST.

WITH a choking cry, Estelle Mack closed her eyes, believing that death was inevitable. The strong grasp upon her hair, the knee pressing sharply into her breast, held her helpless as a lamb bound for slaughter. There was no sign of relenting in those fiercely-blazing eyes.

But the end was not yet. The door was flung open, and a man leaped into the cell. The knife was already falling when he extended his hand and the round white wrist fell into his broad palm, holding it firm as though fixed in a vise.

With a low, angry cry, the madwoman turned her head, while struggling to release her hand. She saw a heavily-bearded face, large eyes now filled with an expression of wondering reproach. There was something in the glance that calmed her strangely. Her struggles ceased. She rose to her feet, letting the dagger fall from her relaxed fingers. Quick as thought the man stooped and secured the weapon; but only to hold the jeweled hilt toward her, saying, in a quick, earnest tone of voice:

"Take your weapon, Clarina. Plant it in

my heart for treating you so roughly; but don't dip your hands in the blood of a woman!"

"I will take the weapon, Richard, but not to use it on you," replied Clarina, in a more natural voice. "I owe you thanks for checking my hand, just now. I believe I was insane; I must have been, else I would never have thought of killing her with a single blow. That would be too great a mercy!"

"Who is she—what has she done that you hate her so bitterly?" asked the man—none other than Richard Pepper, or Pepper-pot, as he is best known to us.

"Look—you have seen the face before!" cried Clarina, stopping forward and pushing back Estelle's head so that the red rays of the torch fell full upon her face.

"George's girl!" muttered Pepper-pot, with an air of utter surprise.

"Ay!" bitterly cried the Spanish woman. "And now do you ask me why I hate her—why you found me just now with my knife at her throat? She stole away his love for me and changed it to disgust and loathing. His love—the light of my life!"

"It will not last—if can't," said Pepper-pot, slowly. "George is no fool, and no man in his sober senses could choose her before you. Perhaps he has been only trying you—trying to make you jealous."

Clarina laughed bitterly.

"He is a good actor, then! Richard, I believe you are my friend—"

"God knows I am!" fervently cried the desperado. "To serve you, to save you one moment's pain, I would give my right arm and count myself the winner. Clarina, is there no hope for me! Must it ever be thus! For one smile—one look of love, I would die the death of a dog. I love you more—bah! words are so weak! I know what I feel, but I shake whenever I try to put my love into words. Clarina, pity me. I don't ask you to love me all at once. Only let me love you—give me the right to love you—"

"Stop, Richard—it is you that need restraining, now," said the Spanish woman, smiling faintly. "I love and respect you as a dear friend—you mustn't ask more of me now. I have been sorely tried to-night. He—but perhaps you know; did he tell you?"

"George? no. I knew that there had been a quarrel, from the looks. I couldn't sit there with him. I went outdoors, and then I learned that you had left the gulch. Dinah told me. I believed you would come here, so I followed as fast as I could."

"You desert him—"

"If he is your enemy he is mine," quietly.

"He is my enemy. Look!" touching a livid bruise upon her forehead with one finger. "That is his mark!"

"He dared to strike you—you cannot mean that!"

"Yes, he struck me. It may have been my fault. I do not know. I can't remember all that passed between us. I was crazy, I believe. He spoke so cruelly! It seemed as though my heart would burst! He taunted me with his love for her, and said that it was my turn to suffer as I had made him suffer in days gone by. I humbled myself in the dust at his feet, I said all that woman could—only to be repulsed with scorn and jeers. That drove me mad. I tried to kill him; then he struck me down."

"It will be a bitter blow for him—I swear it by the Eternal!" hissed Pepper-pot, his face white with deadly passion. "He is no brother of mine. From this moment he is my bitterest enemy, and I swear to hunt him down and wash out that insult in his heart's blood!"

"No, Richard; you must promise me that you will not seek his life. Promise, or you shall never see me again, unless as his avenger."

"He struck you, a woman," muttered Pepper-pot.

"I know; but I drove him to it. No," she added, with a wane smile. "Don't think of me. He is nothing to me, now. My love died with that blow. I only wish to make him suffer. I can do that through

He kep' shovin' me on ontel I struck the right trail. I couldn't 'a' rested ef I wanted to, fer his voice a-callin' fer vengeance. He showed them fellers creepin' into town—them with Hammer Tom. That was all I axed. I folloed 'em like a bloodhound. I struck one on 'em that same night; a greaser. I sarved him as I mean to sarve all the rest, as I mean to sarve you; the way you treated my pard—finger, hand an' head; jest the same way."

A single long, piercing scream burst from the Spanish woman's lips. The crazed miner laughed shortly, as he divined her object. "That won't do you one mite o' good. They're no one in the house; they're all outside. An' even ef they was to hear ya, what better would you be? They couldn't bust open the door in time to save ya."

"They could avenge my death—"

"Like enough," was the quiet response. "I wouldn't much keer ef they did, once I'd settled you. I'd only see my old pard the sooner. He's waitin' fer me. He said he would, an' Petey never lied to me. They wasn't a whiter man in ten States then him. No man never hed a truer pard nor him. An' yit you murdered him, like a wolf! You never give him no show fer his pile. I know that, or he'd 'a' busted the bank, brace game or no, Petey would. You tuck him when he'd bin fightin' the pizen, I reckon, or else double-banked 'im from ahind. An' he, harmless as a suckin' dove! It makes my head go 'round an' 'round when I think of it! Sometimes I reckon I'll go plum crazy with thinkin' so much. I kin see it all so plain. Then he lays, like he was asleepin'. That's what I thought when I fust seed 'im. But then—I see his head a-lyin' on his breast; I tesohed it. I felt the cold blood on my hand. I knowed that he was dead—murdered! 'Peared like somethin' bust-est jest then, in my head, ye know. It felt so queer—like a chunk o' red-hot fire. It burned so bad, ontel he told me what'd cool it. An' I squinch the fire. That was blood—your blood an' that of the devils as helped you to murder him!"

With icy terror at her heart, Clarina listened to this rambling speech. She could see that the man was well nigh crazed, if not actually insane. There was no evidence that her cry for help had reached the friendly ears without. She could only escape by her own wits, if even they could save her.

"It was a cruel deed," she said, slowly. "You are right to swear revenge. But you are wrong in accusing me. I am only a poor, weak woman—"

"I know you're a poor, weak woman," chuckled Woodpecker. "You was Joaquin Murietta's wife when he was alive. You killed my pard, an' now I'm goin' to kill you!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

BACK TO DIAMOND GULCH.

So faithfully had Florio, the Mexican, carried out the instructions of his mistress that Bart Noble never once dreamed of the truth—that he and his party of vigilantes were being sent upon a wild-goose chase. Few if any among their number but had heard of the "sink" at the foot of Lone Tree Butte, connected with which was a wild, thrilling legend of the early days of gold, and nearly one half of the party were personally acquainted with the spot. Thus the vigilante captain did not suffer for want of a guide.

The trail was a long and difficult one for horsemen, now plunging deep into some gloomy canon, now winding upward along the face of a precipice where one false step would dash the unfortunate to the rocks hundreds of feet below, now over high ridges, through grand forests of towering pinnacles, spires and minarets of fantastically carved stone. But the riders had no eyes for the weirdly beautiful vagaries of nature just then. A long, level stretch of barren sand would have pleased them much better. The anticipation of a speedy "circus" with the Pepper brothers had caused them to forget their fatigue and loss of sleep, but now that the "circus" seemed further off than ever, nature reasserted itself, and more than one minor doze nodded in the saddle as they followed at the heels of Bart Noble and his chosen guide, Gopher.

But every trail has two ends, and near the middle of the afternoon, Noble called a halt. His plans were simple, yet such as promised success. The horses were to be securely tethered. The men were to steal forward through the undergrowth and surround the "sink," as nearly as the lay of the ground would permit. Bart Noble was to give the signal. Each man was to rush forward and effect his purpose by the one resolute charge. Dead or alive their game must be bagged.

The plan was perfect, save in one respect, and would doubtless have succeeded to a charm, had the enemy been where expected. The signal was given, the charge made, the eager diggers plunging down the steep sides of the sink with more valor than prudence, but the anticipated "circus" was not to be then.

To say that Bart Noble and his followers cursed long and loudly as the truth flashed upon them, is stating the case very mildly. The recording angel must have used an elastic pen, or else some of the boys in flannel could not have received full credit for their half-hour of tongue exercise.

"Somebody set on me—do!" growled Bart Noble, flinging his hat to the ground and stamping on it. "I'm too big a durned fool to live—jest fit to w-a-r long o'lo's an' diapers an' suck a bottle! Fooled by a woman an' a corn-twisted greaser! I'll shave my haid off an' hire out fer a Chinese wash-woman!"

"It's lucky we're all in the same box," cried Dandy Dave, brightening up. "Thar hain't nobody to tell on us, an' I don't reckon thar's much danger o' this outfit lettin' it leak out."

"I'll lick the galoot as even dreams o' sech a thing," soberly added Noble.

There were many remarks and suggestions made, but only one that calls for especial mention. Long-legged Cornercracker was the speaker. "I move we lay by an' recruit. I, fer one, am mighty nigh tuckered out. Thar's a holler in me bigger'n a bull buffer's hump, an' I hev to prop my eyes open to boot! I move we grub an' snooze a bit."

His motion was promptly seconded, though a minority opposed it. It was held that all the harm had been done already. Beyond a doubt the gulch was now put in order to resist an assault, and a few hours one way or the other could do no especial harm. And reasoning thus, the company went into camp near the spot where they had tethered their animals, where a spring furnished them with an abundance of water. Food was scarce, until a proposition was made which met with universal favor. Lots were drawn to see which man should sacrifice his horse for the benefit of all. The animal was butchered, several fires were kindled and the air was full of the odor of roasting "horse-beef."

After a hearty meal the vigilantes stretched themselves out upon the ground and speedily forgot their bitter disappointment in slumber. Not so Bart Noble. As leader of the party he

felt the sell too acutely for sleeping. So, loading his pipe, he stood on guard. His reflections would not look well on paper. For an hour or more he leaned against the boulder without motion. The fires gradually died out. The moon shone brightly, though at times obscured by light, fleecy clouds. It was during one of these intervals of moonlight that the watcher became fully aware that all was not right.

For several moments his gaze had been fixed upon what appeared to be a curiously-shaped boulder, lying near the center of a grassy plot. It more nearly resembled the grass-grown out of a log, but that he knew it could not be, since the ground had been well-quartered in search of fuel, and such a stick would have been greedily snupped up. Then, while his eyes were vacantly fixed upon it, the seeming boulder swiftly changed its position, disappearing behind a rock several yards nearer the fires.

Instantly Bart Noble was wide awake. He knew now that the boulder was a man, and armed, since he had caught a glimmer of steel in the moonlight. Crouching low down he cocked his revolver, its triple click sounding clear and distinct in the night-air. That the skulker heard it, was evident from his calling out, quickly, though in a guarded tone of voice:

"Don't shoot—I am a friend!"

"You act lots like a frind! I reckon the woods is full o' sech frinds as you be!" retorted Bart, eagerly watching for a chance to send a bullet through the night-walker.

"No, I am alone," replied the man, evidently interpreting the phrase literally. "Promise that you will not shoot, and I'll come out. I am only one; you are forty."

"All right; long as you act straight you shan't be hurt. Show your mug, stranger."

The man promptly arose from his covert and approached. As the moonlight fell fairly upon his face Bart Noble recognized him. It was Jose Sylva.

"You come mighty nigh passin' in your checks that time, old man," grimly observed Noble, returning his revolver to its scabbard. "I wouldn't advise ye to run the same risk over ag'in."

"I've been watching your fires for over an hour, but I wouldn't speak out until I was sure. I know what you are after, and I can give you news that will please you. Chile Colorado is taken—"

"An' the gal?" eagerly cried the digger. "She, too," and then the Mexican briefly detailed the capture of Red Pepper. "More than that," he added; "you will find another of the accused demons lying badly wounded in the house of Diego el Cojo, at the Spanish Quarter. The others you will probably find at Diamond Gulch."

"We tried that; s'arched through the hull place—"

"Did you look in the tunnel; about half-way between the houses and the mine, on the east side?"

"I never saw no tunnel—"

"They must have been hidden there—right under your hand and you knowed how!"

"We did the best we knowed how. A feller can't hit bull's-eye every time, but we'll rake 'em in yit. I'll call the boys an' we'll take saddle right away!"

Ten seconds later the entire camp was on the alert, and wild cheers broke the air as Bart retailed the news brought by Jose Sylva.

"S'posin' he's lyin'," suddenly cried Gopher. "Membe it's another trick. Ef they was a hole thar, big enough to hide three men, wouldn't we 'a' found it with all our huntin'?"

"The tunnel is there," quietly uttered Sylva.

"It runs clear through the eastern ridge. I will show you the way if you wish. You can pass through it, and take them by surprise, while your main force keeps them busy in front."

"You do that, old man, an' it'll be the best day's work you ever put in!" cried Bart Noble. "But ef you air playin' it on us, the minnit we find it out, they won't be enough o' you left together to make a decent-sized fish-bait!"

"I will show you the secret passage. That should satisfy you that I am telling you the truth and dealing honestly with you. I believe you will find them at the gulch, though I could not swear to it."

"We don't ax impossibilities, pard. You do the best you kin an' we'll see to the rest. Now, boys, thar's that cuss at Greasers' Flat. It'll be a nasty place to git him out of, ef he's got frinds thar. They may be a tough fight, an' somebody might git hurt besides greasers. Who'll offer fer to go?"

"You kin take your pick, boss," put in Dandy Dave; "beginnin' at me. Any o' the boys'll go, I reckon."

"You pick 'em, Dandy. You'll boss the job, an' it's ondy right you should hev your choice o' men to back ye. But mind. Take the cuss alive ef you kin, an' kerry him safe to town. The boys hain't hed a hangin' match fer a coon's age."

"Six boys'll be more'n plenty," replied Dandy Dave, pronouncing the names of those whom he wished to bear him company.

Then the two parties separated, mounting their horses and riding briskly away upon their respective missions. Jose Sylva acted as guide to the main force, and, by his more intimate knowledge of the country, succeeded in leading them to Diamond Gulch by a far easier and shorter trail than the one which they had previously used. So expeditions were they that day had not yet dawned when the party drew rein just behind the point of rocks which concealed any one in the valley from view of such as might be keeping guard over the entrance to the gulch.

Bart Noble briefly repeated his instructions. In just two hours—Jose assured him that in that time he could lead them through the secret passage—the miners were to make a mook attack upon the entrance, though taking care not to expose themselves unnecessarily. That would be the signal for him to advance. At the first yell—in Bart's voice—from within, they were to close in at once.

The preliminaries arranged, ten men under Noble set off on foot, crossing the eastern ridge and striking into the same trail which we saw used by Geo. George and his brothers. The same difficulties had to be surmounted, but everything had been provided for, and considerably within the two hours which Sylva had specified the little band were at the opening of the tunnel. Through this the Mexican led the way, knife in hand. But the weapon was not needed. The tunnel was unoccupied by other than themselves.

Crouching just within the edge of bushes, they carefully inspected their weapons, making sure that each cap was perfect and well fitted on the nipples. All was still within the Gulch; so still that it seemed utterly deserted.

Then came the signal from the valley beyond, and, breaking forth, the miners rushed to the attack.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 345.)

To bear is to conquer our fate.

WHAT MY LOVER SAID.

By the merest chance in the twilight gloom, In the orchard path he met me— In the tall, wet grass, with its faint perfume— And I tried to pass, but he made no room— Oh, I tried, but he would not let me! So I stood and blushed till the grass grew red, With my face bent down above it, While he took my hand, as he whispering said— (How the clover lifted each pink, sweet head, To listen to all that my lover said— Oh! the clover in bloom—I love it!)

In the high, wet grass went the path to hide, And the low, wet leaves hung over; But I could not pass upon either side, For I found myself, when I vainly tried, In the arms of my steadfast lover. And he held me close and softly said— While he closed the path before me, And he looked down into my eyes and said— (How the leaves bent down from the boughs a'er-head, To listen to all that my lover said— Oh! the leaves hanging lowly o'er me!)

Had he moved aside a little way, I could surely then have passed him; And would not have heard what he had to say, Could I only aside have cast him. It was almost dark, and the moments sped, And the searching night-wind found us; But he drew me nearer and softly said— (How the pure, sweet wind grew still, instead, To listen to all that my lover said— Oh! the whispering wind around us!)

I am sure he knew when he held me fast, That I must be all unwelcome; For I tried to go, and I would have passed, As the night was coming with its dew at last, And the sky with stars was filling; But he clasped me close when I would have fled.

And he made me hear his story, And his soul came out from his lips and said— (How the stars crept out where the white moon led, To listen to all that my lover said— Oh! the moon and stars in glory!)

I know that the grass and the leaves will not tell, And I'm sure that the wind—precious rover— Will carry his secret so safely and well

That no being shall ever discover One word of the many that rapidly tell From the eager lips of my lover, Shall never reveal what a fairy-like spell They wove 'round about us that night in the dell.

In the path through the dew-laden clover; Nor e'er the whispers that made my heart swell As they fell from the lips of my lover.

Rifle and Tomahawk.

BY "TEXAS JACK,"
(J. B. OMOHONDRO.)

CHAPTER XIX.

A STRANGE MEETING.

WHEN Fearless Frank entered the cavern with the horses, he quickly secured them, and then sought the spot where lay Hart Moline, the Rose of the Rosebud supporting his head.

Presently the burning eyes of the wounded man opened, and their gaze rested upon the handsome face of the scout.

"Frank Singleton! great God! what a retribution," he gasped, rather than said, through his shut teeth.

"Yes, Hart Moline; it is Frank Singleton, and you have fallen by my hand; but not for the past did I slay you. No, though I hated you for that I would not do that. I slew you because you are a renegade to your race."

"Ha! who says this?"

"I do! This very night I heard your plans with Sitting Bull, and I tracked you here to punish you as you deserved."

"Will I die, Singleton? Say, is there no chance that I may live, for I would not die here like a dog?" cried the wretched man, eagerly.

"None! the bullet passed clear through your body. You are doomed, and it is better so; another week and your guilty soul would have more to answer for," sternly said the scout.

"It has enough, God knows; but, tell me again, Singleton, there's got to be a shadow of hope for me! I do not wish to die, and beg you, for God's sake, save me! Save my life now, Singleton, and my blood will not be on your hands, on your soul. Remember, Frank, we were boys together, and then you loved me; I know you did, and dearly did I love you, so do not let your hand take my life."

At the wild entreaty of the man Frank Singleton shuddered, and his face became livid in the moonlight.

But he answered sadly:

"It is too late now, Hart; the blow is given, and you cannot live; if I could, willingly now would I save you."

"Him, God! oh, God! if there be a God, let Him have mercy now on now all that I have done; you do not know of my crime-stained, wicked life, and how I have wronged you. Listen, Frank, and I will tell you all, even though you curse me for it."

"Frank, Marian never loved me. She loved you, and that turned my heart against you."

"Ay, when you went into the army, and were ordered off on the border, I determined to break off the engagement between you and Marian."

"It was hard to make her doubt you; hard, indeed; but at last she severed the engagement between you, and after a year I won her promise to become my wife."

"She told me frankly that she did not, and never could love me as she did you; but I told her that I would be content, and, urged by her father, she gave me her hand."

"Well, I was always a wild, reckless fellow, as you know, Frank, and quickly gambled away my property; but, ere I became a beggar, Marian left me, and came West with her father, who, having lost his means in speculation, determined to establish himself out here as a farmer."

"Shortly after their departure I got into a gambling difficulty, and in a fit of madness shot dead one of my comrades."

"Strange to say, I came West, found out Marian and her father, and was forgiven the past; but they knew not of my other and worse crime."

"By accident I got from the mail one day a bundle of papers for Marian's father; I opened the envelope, and found that my wife and her brother had inherited a large fortune, to be held by keeping by the father, or a guardian chosen by him, until my wife's brother should be of age."

"The devil tempted me then, and I began a worse career of crime, for I kept the legacy a secret, and—and—but I will confess it: I waylaid my father-in-law one night, as he was coming home, and shot him down."

"You did this crime, Hart Moline?"

"Wait and hear all, Frank—hear what a precious pet of Satan I have been."

"Yes, I shot him, and none suspected me."

"Then I began to gamble again, and all the frontier towns knew me as a desperate man."

"At length, I drove my wife's brother from his home, and yet through all she clung to me, though I made her life a misery, her home a very perdition."

"Determined at last to go East and attempt to claim my wife's property, I left her at Fort

R—, under the care of the commandant and his wife, and started for New York.

"There I found that the property was in the hands of a lawyer, who was as corrupt as myself, for he told me that if my wife were dead he would turn her share over to me—for a consideration."

"I at once returned West, sought the fort, and was as good as man could be to his wife, and she seemed almost happy; but what is the matter, Frank?"

"Nothing! go on; I hear every word."

"The Rose of the Rosebud also has ears. The pale-face is a bad man; he has a black heart," said the maiden, firmly.

"There was one in the fort, a woman, for whom I held a guilty love, and to her I told my plan. It was to ride out on horseback with Marian, and return in several days, saying that Indians had captured us, and that I had escaped."

"At a convenient distance I had two companions awaiting me—desperate characters, both of them."

"One of them I knew; the other I had never seen; he was engaged by the tool I hired."

"Not to be recognized by him, I wore a heavy false beard, and when I put it on the act greatly frightened Marian, and she wished to go back to the fort."

"Soon after we met the two men at the appointed place, and we started for the Sioux country, it being my intention to bring Marian hither, and give her to the Sioux."

"Great God!"

"Well you may exclaim at my wickedness, Singleton."

"In spite of her entreaties and tears, I came on with her until several nights ago, when, near the camps of the Sioux, we espied a scouting party of cavalry, and with a wild shriek Marian called to them."

"They heard and came toward us—discovery would bring death to us, and I reluctantly gave the order to my men to stop her mouth."

"They took me at my word—one of them dealing her a severe blow on the head, the other drawing his knife across her throat—oh, God! shut out the memory of that moment from me, and the miserable wretch hid his face in his hands."

But the scout stood cold, stern and silent—his arms folded upon his breast.

"We could not leave her there to be discovered, and one of the men took her across his saddle, and we sped away."

"Eluding the cavalry, I led the way to a spot I knew well—I had often camped there when hunting—and there we buried her, and—Oh, holy God! the grave has yielded up its dead!"

With eyes starting from their sockets, with scared, wild face, the man shrunk back, his arms stretched out as though to ward off some horrid specter.

Before him, like an avenging angel, with pale and haggard face, stood Marian—she whom he believed in her grave!

One wild, loud, piercing shriek, and Hart Moline's life had ended.

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

THOUGH the eyes stared wildly, and the lips were parted, as though about to speak, Hart Moline was dead; his evil spirit had forever left its tenement of clay, his wicked heart had ceased its pulsations, never to throb again.

From the dead man before her, from him who had been her husband, the poor woman, smitten against so cruelly, turned her large, luminous eyes upon Frank Singleton, who still stood, with arms folded across his broad breast, gazing stern and silent upon the scene.

Weirdly beautiful she looked there in the moonlight, her face pale as death, and her riding-habit clinging close around her faultless form—more like a marble statue than a being of flesh and blood she seemed.

"Frank Singleton, thus we meet again, after six long years of separation."

"I believed you false—you believed me false—his story, his tongue now palsied by death, has told how cruelly deceived we both were, for I have heard his whole story of crime."

"My ears have drank in all. God knows I knew that he was wicked, I felt that he was evil at heart, yet I never believed him such as he has this night confessed himself. It is hard for me to abhor the memory of him that was my husband; but so it must be."

"It is to you, then, that I owe my life—my release from an awful death, for so my kind nurse here has told me; there is more to tell, more that you can tell, and will tell me one of these days."

"But I am weak now. Though they struck at my life and failed, yet they have given me much pain, and I need rest."

"To you, Frank, I leave it, that I see not his body again, for even in death it is terrible."

The woman turned slowly to move away, not even casting one glance upon the dead.

"Sister!"

All started at the sound, and the woman turned back with a nervous shudder.

"Sister Marian—I am here," came the voice from the shadow of the cavern.

"Oh, God, Thou art good! It is my brother's voice! He has come to me," cried the woman. The next instant a slender form bounded into the bright moonlight from the darkness of the cave.

It was Ned Wyld, and with a glad cry he threw his arms around his sister. Those whom he sought he had found—the one he had tracked for love, the other he had trailed for revenge.

Then from out the shadow came two other forms—Old Solitary and Montana Mike—for, with that they had been quiet observers of all that had transpired, having entered the cavern, but refrained from breaking in upon the death-scene.

For a moment the brother and sister remained enfolded in a warm embrace, and then Frank Singleton said, kindly:

"Have you no word for me, Ned?"

"Indeed I have, Mr. Singleton. I have not forgotten you, young as I was when we last met, and now to you I owe more than to any one else living."

"Of that we will not speak, Ned; but your sister is weak, and she has had a terrible trial to-night—let the Rose of the Rosebud lead her into the tepee—and see, we must be off, for, ere long, daybreak will be upon us, and five thousand Sioux warriors are within call of us. Will the Rose still care for the pale-face lady until she is strong enough to leave the village of the Sioux?"

"The Rose loves the lily of the pale-faces; she will be a sister to her," answered the maiden, twining her arm around the slender waist of Marian.

Suddenly a tall form bounded forward and confronted the Rose of the Rosebud.

It was Montana Mike, and he gazed into the face of the maiden with a startled, searching look.

"Girl, who are you?" he asked, in a voice that shook with emotion.

"I am the Rose of the Rosebud—the daughter of the Sioux nation," she answered, proudly.

"No, no, no—who are you, girl? I say who are you?"

"The Rose of the Rosebud has spoken."

"No, you have not told me—speak! does the red blood of the Indian flow in your veins?"

"The Rose sprung up in a different soil from that which nurtured the red children of the plains. Once she was a pale-face, many moons ago; but those who loved her are gone," and the maiden spoke sadly.

"Oh, no, girl! Here is one who loves you. Rose Massey, you are my child!"

"Ten long years ago the Sioux robbed me of home, wife and child—"

"My wife's dead body I saw and buried—the body of my daughter I never found—"

"You are that child—speak, and tell me that you remember me, that you know your father, and God will bless you."

In earnest pleading the man stood before her, and as the bright moonlight fell full upon his face the maiden gazed thereon with a puzzled look, while all around awaited in silence her answer.

Gradually her face changed, the muscles quivered, the eyes drooped, and then were raised, and the bosom heaved convulsively—memory was trooping up from the long-buried past.

Again the eyes fell, the fingers were clasped together and worked nervously, and then her gaze rested once more upon the face of the man.

"Speak to her as was your wont in her childhood—call her by some pet name you had for her," whispered the scout, and his voice sounded hollow and strange; it seemed almost to break the spell of a scene that was holy.

"My Rose of the wilderness—come to your papa," said Montana Mike, trembling like a reed shaken by the wind, and his voice quivering with emotion.

The eyes met his own, then, the arms were outstretched, and with a glad, thrilling cry, the maiden sprang forward, saying:

"Papa, oh, my papa, I know you now—you have come for your little Rose."

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN the gray dawn of approaching day began to brighten in the eastern skies, four horsemen rode slowly from the cavern behind the cataract, and set off at a rapid pace over the prairie.

These four were Frank Singleton, Mike Massey, Fred Wyld and Old Solitary, who, having forgotten his own Christian name himself, it is no wonder that I can not recall it.

Without sparing spur they pressed on rapidly, until they at length arrived in Crook's camp.

Steadily advancing, though slowly, into the Indian country, General Crook greeted the return of Fearless Frank and his companions with delight, and the news brought him by the scout told him that a fight was near at hand—that soon he must meet the famous Sitting Bull and his thousands of braves.

Sooner than he had expected the battle came—the Battle of the Rosebud, the result of which is already known to those who have thus far read my romance of the recent war with the cruel Sioux.

Though the Indians temporarily checked the advance of General Crook, by their splendid fighting, and the superb generalship of their chiefs, they were also glad to retreat, and at once deserted their camps on the Rosebud, pushing further into the mountains.

Following closely upon the retreating Sioux, were four daring scouts, who had distinguished themselves in the Battle of the Rosebud, and need not be again presented to the reader. As the last warrior fled over the hills, where had stood his mountain village, Fearless Frank and his three companions dashed through the spray of the cascade, and found themselves in the open glen.

The tepee of the Medicine Queen was gone, and the spot looked

A HUNDRED YEARS.

BY FRANK M. IMBRIE.

What was that light in the Western orient,
Melted the cloud-cascades to flame?
What was that sound whose thund'rous echo
Startled the world from main to main?
What was it that bursted from the East,
Kindling a yoman's hopes and fears?
What? 'Twas one word whose scintillant
splendor
Burns in the crown of a hundred years.

CHORUS.

A hundred years! Ring out the triumph,
The old bell pealed as patriots trod!
Bind the patriarch's brow with silver
Coined from smiles of Freedom's God!

What was it reared the mammoth bulwarks,
Where couchant thought sprung into light;
Where woke the blazing eye of Genius;
Where deathless minds demanded Right?
What was it that oped the magic gateway,
The brain's highway—the court of seers—
The mighty Press—the people's guardian—
The master-stroke of a hundred years.

What was it that trod with iron footsteps
O'er trackless seas with trackless stride,
Bearing a living, breathing freightage
From land to land on every side?
Strode, while a world stood mazed in wonder,
Still the shout for her prince of peers?
Let it resound, on a future's victor—
The giant mind of a hundred years.

What was it that bound the flights of fancy
With quivering bonds of living steel,
Sending our thoughts through aerial regions,
Surprising Time at his onward wheel?
Girdling the globe with river waters
A huge Leviathan appears—
Boundless the Field who loosed the monster,
The master-work of a hundred years.

What was it that tinged our herald-morning
With snows of peace, with vivid bars?
What was it that struck our grand reveille?
What was it that lit our blazoned stars?
What is it comes with soft-toned cadence?
A century's sighs, a century's tears—
These are the gems of shimmering luster
That mists the crown of a hundred years.

CHORUS.

A hundred years! Strike peals of triumph;
Shout loud, oh, earth! respond, ye sea!
A nation's God protect our freedom,
Till Time, itself, no more shall be!

Great Adventurers.

THE NORSEMEN.

The Old Sea-Kings and "Vineland."

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

THAT Columbus was not the first European to look upon the Western World is now a conceded historic fact.

And it seems to be almost equally well proven that, eight hundred years ago, northern America was much less frigid and inhospitable than at the present day.

The fact that in Siberia, along the Arctic Sea coast line, is one of our regular sources of ivory supply, from the tusks of the now extinct mastodon, in itself pretty conclusive evidence of at least a temperate climate in that region. So vast must have been the herds of these immense creatures that the forest growth to sustain them must also have been of rank luxuriance. But, to-day, and since the historic record with the Arctic zone commenced—say for four hundred years—no herbivorous animal has or has had its habitat there save the moss and lichen-eating deer and musk ox.

The Norsemen, or "Sea-Kings," who, for nearly two centuries, were the terror of the British Isles, and swarmed all over the North Sea, after the Roman decadence, came from Scandinavia—what is now Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Baltic coasts. No mere ice-land could have produced such a race of adventurers; the "Halls of Odin" and the realms of Thor were not possible in a land of snow and berg. Under all theavoring circumstances of modern civilization those countries are but thinly peopled, save in the more southern extremity.

The cold zone has been slowly but sensibly creeping down from the north. Within a few years it has been announced that Iceland, after having been peopled for nearly a thousand years, is no longer habitable. Where once, on its surface, were pleasant farms, are now only desert wastes, verdureless and frigid. Just a little rim along the sea, where the Gulf Stream current tempers the air, is now habitable at all, and even there the intelligent and hardy Icelanders have a struggle for life that is depopulating the old Danish province, and in a few years, in all probability, we shall witness the entire desertion of that old Norse domain. Its towns, its public buildings, its homes will remain alone and tenantless in cold desolation.

Iceland, discovered A. D. 861, was peopled about the year 870, by the Danes, and soon became a flourishing colony. From thence it was an easy step to Greenland; so a colony was planted there in the year 880. It was named Greenland from the green hue of its hills and valleys, and was considered an important acquisition. Under Eric the Red, the colony grew; hamlets and even towns sprung up, and a spirit of enterprise prevailed that indicated everything else than a frigid temperature ten months of the year, as is the condition there to-day.

An Icelandic named Herolf (or Herjulf) and his son Bjorn (or Bjorn), trading in two vessels between Norway and Iceland, were separated, A. D. 1001, by a storm, and when the son finally reached home he learned that his father had sailed for Eric's colony in Greenland; so thither he determined to follow.

He was buffeted by a powerful north wind that drove his little vessel, for days, before it, to the south-west. He at length struck a low-lying land, covered with forests, with an island off the coast. He returned northward to Eric's colony, and the announcement of the discovery so inflamed the spirit of adventure, there, that Lief, the son of Eric, governor of the colony, fitted out a vessel, and with a crew of twenty-five men, and Bjorn for pilot, he started for the new country, A. D. 1002. He first sighted a coast which he named Helleland (Land of Rocks), supposed to be Labrador. Running south, he soon found a land of low, wood-covered shores, with a beach of very white sand. This he named Markland (Land of Wood)—supposed to be Newfoundland, east coast. Two days' more sailing and he made land again—a small island before the main land. There he landed, and found the climate soil, and products all encouraging. Embarking again, he rounded what is supposed to have been the south-east extremity of Newfoundland, and sailed west, until he came to a river. Up this he ran (supposed to be Fortune Bay), and finding a creek, ran up it. Everything was pleasant—air balmy, land covered with richest verdure, the bushes bearing berries, and in the woods were found grapes, which a German among the crew informed the Danes were the source of wine. Everything was so inviting that they resolved to tarry there for the winter, and did so, christening it *Vinland*—in deference to its riches in vines—or, more fully, *Vinland dot Gude*—the Good Wine Country. The winter was passed pleasantly,

and the vessel returned, next spring (A. D. 1003), to Greenland to report the good news. A number of the adventurers had remained to found a colony. And this was the first European settlement in America.

Grave discussions followed over the location of Vinland (or Vinland.) The historians who have dragged to light the old records of these voyages—well preserved in Icelandic literature—have different views of the precise location. Dr. Forster is inclined to fix it at the head of the Bay of Exploits, on the east coast of the island, for the reason that the landmarks are favorable, and because the chronicles announced that the sun arose on the shortest day at eight o'clock. This would make it on parallel 48°—where Forster indicates. But others see it differently. There are not wanting good reasons to sustain the text we have accepted, which gives the colony a far more favorable location than in the bleak region around the Bay of Exploits. There the cold north-east winds are very hard to endure, while on the south coast of the island, along which sweeps the warm current of the tide in from the Gulf Stream, the surroundings are wholly consistent with a land of vines.

Voyages between Greenland and Vinland followed. In 1004 the colonists first found natives. That summer three canoes, containing three men in each, came in the bay. The Norsemen killed them all save one, who escaped, and paddling away, informed his tribe of the slaughter and brought them down upon the invaders, whose ships now rode at anchor in the waters. The natives were easily driven off. They were called by the colonists *Skrælings* (chips or dwarfs) from their diminutive size, and are supposed to have been Esquimaux from Labrador above, who probably ran down the west coast of Newfoundland every summer in pursuit of fish, game, fruit, etc.

This encounter, however, opened communication with the natives, and a profitable commerce in furs sprung up, which continued for years, until the quarrels of rival chiefs and wars at home wrought disaster to the colony, and from all that can be learned, those of the Norsemen who remained amalgamated with the natives and produced the race that was found on Newfoundland by the English—a race wholly unlike any other in color, features, habits and language.

In the year 1121, Eric, bishop of Greenland, went to Vinland to recover his countrymen from the savage condition into which they had degenerated, but, strange to tell, Eric and all his followers never were heard of.

The sagas or old-time stories detail the progress of this deterioration of the settlers until, in the year 1050, a priest sent for their reconversion was cruelly murdered by them. After that they seem to have been given up until the good bishop Eric, as above stated, resolved to reclaim his lost brethren. Whether Eric was lost at sea, or perished at the hands of his degenerate countrymen, never will be known. From that date the Norsemen in Vinland wholly disappear from observation or mention.

Had Greenland prospered, doubtless the new country would have been reclaimed; but it is supposed that about that time climatic changes took place, rendering it yearly more difficult to maintain the colonies there. What caused this change we will try to indicate.

While the fever of adventure was on the Norsemen, in the first years of the discovery of the continent, it is presumed that they cruised along down the coast to Cape Cod or Newport Bay, for many antiquarians see in the celebrated and most mysterious Round Tower of Newport a certain sign of their presence there; but it is yet to be proven that that Tower is their handiwork. It certainly was the work of a civilized race, built, as it is, with architectural skill and nicety, with selected stone, laid up with a strong mortar. For what purpose it was erected no one can say. It simply is a round room sustained on a beautiful series of arches and pillars, standing on a slight elevation that slopes away gently to the waters of the land-locked harbor. If the Norsemen did not build it, who did? It was there, and in its present roofless condition, when the English first penetrated Newport Bay.

But the most startling mystery of the north is the entire disappearance of a group of islands—one of them larger than Iceland, and known as Frisland. This land, as a royal domain, comes out in the story of the Venetian brothers Zeno—one of whom, in the year 1380, was driven upon it in an adventurous voyage to Britain and Flanders. He was well received by the chief or king of the island, and given command of his fleet. This brother thereupon sent to his younger brother Antonio, in Venice, asking him to come on and share his good fortune. Antonio went to Frisland, and in the service of the king—who aimed at the supremacy of the North Sea—they assailed both Iceland and Greenland, and cruised one thousand miles to the westward. Besides the evidence of the letters written by Antonio to his brother Carlo in Venice, we have other proof which goes to show that Frisland was such a country and inhabited by such a race as the Zeno brothers described. Authorities agree that it was larger than Iceland, and Hakluyt says larger than Ireland. Frobenius saw and spoke of Frisland, in each of his three north voyages (1576-77-78). He exactly locates it, viz.:

"July 4th, (1577), we made land perfect, and knew it to be Frisland. Found ourselves in latitude 60° and were fallen with the southernmost part of this land. It is thought to be on a line with inferior to England. . . . They the Zeno brothers have in their sea-charts described every part; and for so much of the land as we have sailed along, comparing their charts with the coast, we find it very agreeable."

This land no longer has any existence! Captain Hall sailed over its site in 1612, but failed to find it. On his map, or chart for his guidance, Frisland was laid down between 61° and 62° latitude, about four hundred miles N. W. of Scotland. Frobenius' island of "Buss" was placed in latitude 57°. This island Frobenius fell in with, on his return from his third Arctic voyage, in the ship Buss, "in latitude 57½°, fifty leagues S. E. of Frisland." He sailed along it for three days. It, too, has disappeared. It probably was simply the south-eastern part of Frisland, which must have gone down in the sea, with all its inhabitants, between the years 1578 and 1612.

Now for the results. As the warm Gulf Stream was deflected toward Iceland and East Greenland, in consequence of the great land of Frisland, lying mostly in the path of its flow, it made Iceland and Greenland sensibly warmer and habitable during their first settlements, but, as the island began to subside, the current began to flow more away from the western lands, and finally, when the whole of Frisland disappeared under water, the Gulf Stream ran over its site. As the island was about three hundred miles in diameter the warm stream began to flow more and more over it for that extent of surface, but not until the sinking land had gone down to a great depth was the Gulf Ocean River fully deflected to its present bed. Then ice-fields began to collect along all

the coast between Greenland and Iceland, and, in consequence, Iceland grew colder, and yearly more inhospitable. And now, as Frisland has sunk probably to its lowest depth, the warm Gulf Stream flows so far away that Iceland is frigid beyond reclamation. In a few years more all its people will have passed either over to Denmark or to British North America, where already they have secured concessions of land and formed the nucleus of their new home.

The changes that time has wrought on Greenland and Iceland seem to have affected Newfoundland. Its wine land is wine land no more.

Pert.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

DARE sprang down from his horse and doffed his hat to the pretty girl standing by the roadside, her back against a tree-bolt, a basket at her feet in which some ugly brown paper parcels were hidden by the gorgeous flowers of a shrub she had been despoiling.

"I beg pardon! Will you be so kind as to direct me to Arundale?"

"To Arundale," repeated the girl, looking at him with an interest so great that for a moment she forgot to reply to his question. "Then the people have come there, have they?"

He smiled at her childlike curiosity. "I am going there if I ever find my way out of these lanes and byways; and if you can oblige me—"

"Oh, go ahead and turn to the left where the three roads meet. Then"—she paused a moment to consider, and announced abruptly: "I'll go along and show you the turn which will put you on the straight road. It's on my way."

She tied on her hat which had swung upon her arm, and was about taking up her basket again, but with an "Allow me" he anticipated her motion.

"I shouldn't think you'd like carrying that truck any better than I do," she said, in a contemptuous tone. "Gentlemen don't usually."

"Don't they? I really wasn't aware of the fact. It appears to me now that any gentleman might be proud of bearing such a floral trophy, Miss—"

"Jones," she interpolated, curtly, with a curl of her red lips as he paused for the name.

"—Miss Jones; all the more when he is commissioned by one of the graces."

"One of the graces named Pert Jones," said the girl, with a short, scornful laugh. "And instead of a floral trophy you are carrying sugar and starch and tea for aunt Jude Jones, the laundress. You'd better give me the basket, sir."

He looked at her with an amused smile. "No, no," he said. "I shall exact thanks in proportion to the value of the service rendered, and that will not leave us quits by a long way."

Miss Pert Jones' chin went an inch higher in the air as if resenting the speech, and she walked on in dignified silence without giving him a look. The light of bold admiration deepened as he watched the little figure home before him with its swift, elastic tread. What manner of girl was this, who wondered, who disdained flattering speeches, who was beautiful as Venus, and who flung her low station defiantly in his teeth while she bore herself like a queen? Dare, fresh from Fifth Avenue mansions, was impressed with a sort of fascinated interest.

"Do they raise many such girls in Allahoma, I wonder? Ye gods! that patrician head, that arched instep, to be allied to the name of Jones. It's enough to make one hope she may change it soon."

She stopped abruptly, pointing westward. "That's your way. You can see the chimneys of Arundale over the trees yonder. Good-evening, sir!"

"Wait a moment, please. Do you live near here?"

"Just around the hill there."

"May I come to see you and thank you for the favor you have done me to-night?"

The red blood ran swiftly into the girl's cheeks, but she shook her head.

"No."

"Why not?"

Her magnificent Southern eyes lit with a flash as she answered proudly:

"The guests at a place like Arundale do not honor their laundress by calling upon her. If you have any orders, aunt Jude will be happy to go for them or send Gus."

Mr. Dare twisted his golden moustache in evident annoyance and perplexity. Then a luminous idea came to him.

"I hear they are going to have a fandango of some sort at the house to-morrow. Are you coming?"

"The festivities are in honor of the new owner of Arundale," said Pert, with the precision of one who repeats a lesson. "There is to be a dinner on the lawn for the tenantry, with dancing and fireworks afterward, a feast at the quarters, and a ball at the house in the evening. As I am neither a tenant, a negro, nor a lady, I shall not be there."

"By George! as much a lady as any one who will be there," cried Dare, impatiently. "I say, if the fellow who had the management of the thing, the agent, you know, sends you an invitation yet, will you come?"

Pert gave him an incredulous glance, while her breast heaved away upon her lips. If she could, if she only could! The very thought set all the blood in her veins tingling.

"Madame Dare," she faltered; "Madame Dare would never send one."

"Madame Dare will do as I ask her."

"Then I'll come."

"Good child! I knew you would." But she was already off, flying away through the dusk. Dare laughed a low, satisfied laugh to himself as he sprang again into his saddle.

ings, Gus Jones, as you have for me, for all you pretend so much."

"I hadn't been a pretending," said the awkward young fellow who had come nearer her, doggedly. "What's the use suspending that of me when I'm only anxious you should take me at my word to-morrow."

"I shall not take you, depend on it."

"Don't quarrel, children. For you, Pert, you might go further and do worse than to take Gus. You won't find one to treat you better."

"Then I'll do without any. There's your goods, aunt Jude. I've done enough for you to-day not to be badgered now, I think."

"If you weren't a silly chit you'd know what was for your good. It's all the thanks I'm to have for my trouble and care of you; I'm to see my boy break his heart because I was soft enough to bring you up like my own."

"It'll not be for me, Aunt Jude. He kept all his sweet words for Tillie Gray, until a month ago. You like her better to-day than you do me, Gus, and I know it. You can get her now for the asking, and it's the mitten you'll get all around, if you put it off too long."

Mrs. Jones turned hastily toward the doorway.

"Come in out of the night, children. You've kept me waiting tea till it's spoiled, like as not, Pert."

"Then you can just let it wait a minute longer, mother. She said the truth, if it ever was said. Tillie Gray won't stand it to be fooled, and she'll think I'm fooling if I hang off and on so. I've tried to please you, and I'm willing still if it's to be done; but if Pert won't have me, I don't see the sense of losing 'em both. She's not such a forgiving critter that I'd risk much for the sake of getting her, so if you're agreeable, mother—"

"Gus! Gus!" cried the woman, warningly. "It's time we made an end of it," said Gus, stoutly. "Murder will out, and I doubt if you or I have any better off. You haven't done your duty to Pert, over and above as I can see, and if she don't take to me enough to bear with me now, things ain't apt to better themselves by-and-by. It ain't natural that they should. I ain't one to preach, but it seems to me it's time the square thing was done all around, and so if Pert says it again, I'll make it convenient to want the girl that's wanting me, instead of one that gives me nothing but hard words from week's end to week's end."

"Stick to that and you'll not get so many of them. You're not such a bad fellow, Gus, when you don't bother me. Oh," she said, in a sudden fit of repentance, "I've been nothing but a trouble to you and aunt Jude, and ever since that day Madame Dare rode by here I haven't felt like myself. It was that very day you asked me first, Gus, and I said 'No,' as I say it now and always will."

The eyes of the mother and son met in a significant glance, but Pert, who was planted now with her back against the door-frame, and her troubled face, turned toward the outer night, saw nothing. She was glad when tea was over and the dishes washed, and she free to go up to her attic chamber and dream of Arundale. They were at breakfast next morning when her invitation thither came. Pert glanced appealingly toward Aunt Jude. She sat in her place, a figure as gray, and grim, and still as if she had been carved from stone, her eyes upon her plate, her lips set in a hard line. The girl slipped from her seat, and put her arm about the woman's neck.

"Say I can go, auntie, please. You would if you knew how badly I want to."

"Then go, for all of me." It was not a gracious consent, but it was better than Pert had expected.

"Gray says that young Mr. Dare has come, and is a pleasant-spoken gentleman," volunteered Gus, his eyes upon his mother's face. "But it does seem a pity for Arundale to go to one that's a most no kin at all to the Arundels. Do you know they was saying, mother, if the little girl had lived she'd be fifteen year old to-day?"

"My birthday," said Pert, involuntarily; "and just my age. But she would have been mistress of Arundale."

Aunt Jude's stony lips moved then. "She was lost in the wing that was burned down the same night her father was killed. They'd have hung him only that they had to shoot him dead to get him at all."

"You were in the house that night, mother?"

"Yes, and I'll never forget it. Not likely I should. Arundale was a good man, kind-hearted and free-handed. He gave us a shelter and we work when it was the darkest hour for you and me, Gus, and I'm going to pay back the debt before this day's over. Depend on it."

An approving glow flashed up into that raw youth's florid face; and to Pert, listening in puzzled wonderment, he seemed to have gained some new element of manliness which won a warmer feeling for him than she had given him for many a long day.

It was all over, the feasting, the dancing, the gay groups dotting the lawn, the shower of fireworks ascending when complete darkness fell. It was the signal for the tenantry to disperse, and marked the hour when Madame Dare's aristocratic company had arrived. It was a day which would stand out separate and distinct from all others in Rupert's memory: the day of her triumph, for she had danced with Vernon Dare more times than any other girl there, and a little regretful sigh waved over her lips to know that the day was done.

She looked up with a start as a snow-white, jeweled hand touched her, into Madame Dare's face.

"If you would like to come inside and hear the music, it will please me to have you do so. My son tells me you are fond of music."

"Very." The heart of the girl gave an eager bound; but now, as before, Madame Dare assured herself that the pretty little rustic would be no blemish upon her social scene.

"If the young lady has consented, I will do myself the honor of conducting her in," said Vernon's voice, and it needed no words to tell Rupert that it was to him she owed this continuance of her treat.

There was a few moments' delay while Gus, who was to act as her escort home, was found, and his permission for her stay obtained. As they neared the entrance, a servant fitted out to intercept them with a message from Madame Dare. They were requested to attend her in the library without delay.

"An odd message from the madame just at this time," said Vernon, with a shrug. "I hope she hasn't repented," he thought, uneasily. "It would cut me almost as much as the little one herself to have her disappointed now."

It was rather a singular tableau which presented itself as the library door swung back to admit them.

Aunt Jude was standing, straight and stiff as a poker, under the central chandelier, her stony face of the morning, as shown by the downpour of brilliant light, unchanged. The superannuated parson from Allahoma sat near

and opposite him, with a perplexed look upon her face, Madame Dare waited.

She addressed herself to her son. "These persons have something to communicate which requires your presence and that of Miss Jones, Vernon. I granted an interview, as I assuredly should not have done had I known what conditions were to attend it. Pray, proceed."

Judith Jones bridled under that coolly-inclusive tone.

"I'll not keep you long, ma'am. I've only to tell you that you're not the mistress here, nor him the master. It's that girl there, who I've called my niece, is lawful owner of Arundale. She's Rupert Arundel's daughter, no kin of mine. I saved her when they all thought she was lost on that fearful night. I kept the secret in the bloody war times that she might be safer, and afterward for reasons of my own, maybe, I'm telling you the truth, madame and sir, and Mr. Du Boyce is my witness. He was the only living human I could trust to keep my secret, and he's known of it all along."

"It is as she says," spoke the venerable minister. "The child is Rupert Arundel's daughter; and had Mrs. Jones been advised by me, her identity would never have been concealed."

"I'd a hope that she and Gus might take to each other," said aunt Jude, in her hard, unflinching tone. "A vain hope, for he took to his kind and she to hers as if they'd known. He suspected me after I'd gave him a hint that Pert had a fortune a-waiting her, and he'll think the better of me after I've made amends for keeping her out of it so long."

Madame Dare's face was white, but calm. Rupert looked from her up into Vernon's eyes, her own dilating wildly.

"Can this be true? Oh, can it be?"

"I think it is, Ruperta."

"And you?"

"I'm striving to speak lightly. 'I shall retire from the scene, let us hope with a good grace, since it is all which remains for me to do. I have the felicity of being first to congratulate you, cousin Ruperta.'"

The last she never heard. The lighted room wavered before her eyes and he caught her, his heart beating madly against the unconscious form as he held it close for one instant.

Despite her later remonstrances, he did go—for two years. But she remained under Madame Dare's tutelage, and when Vernon returned he found her all he ever dreamed she might become.

It was no more than right perhaps that he really become master of Arundale after all.

"For," he says to Rupert, "you should just as surely have been mistress here had the long-kept secret never been disclosed. I made up my mind to that in the very hour I saw you first."

And she believes it in her heart's core.

The Hunted Bride; OR, WEDDED, BUT NOT WON.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN, AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," "BRAVE BARBARA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

There were exciting scenes in Branthope Villa that night. The answer which Uncle Peter received, when he frantically demanded his niece, struck home to his heart the death-blow so long ready to fall. His nephew softened the blow all that he could by art and delay, first beginning with a story of Margaret's attachment to a gentleman, whose acquaintance she had formed on board the ship during their last summer's voyage—how she had gone down to the city to fulfill a secret promise she had made of becoming his wife—how they were married in church, himself being one of the witnesses—and how, in the act of stepping into a small boat, which was to bear them to their tropical home, the boat had partially upset, the whole party thrown into the water, and Margaret drowned.

"Margaret dead!" exclaimed the old man, rising from his bed, and advancing, without assistance, to the center of the room, with upraised arm, as if to strike the bearer of the news.

"And buried?" he added, a moment later, gazing at Branthope, who could only nod an affirmative reply.

"There has been foul play!" cried the old man, in a high, sharp key; "foul play, I say! Dead—and buried without my seeing her without my being summoned! You are a rascal, Branthope Maxwell! You have had a hand in this!—a murderer—a—I know not what. Call the housekeeper! Call some one, I say! I will send for the sheriff—I will put the case in his hands! Margaret! my little girl! oh, where are you? Why don't you come to poor old Uncle Peter? It is dark, and you do—do not come. Margaret!—oh, what a fond, passionate, yearning cry!—but even as he gave it, the old man swayed and tottered, and Branthope sprang forward only in time to prevent his fall upon the floor.

Before he dared lay down his burden to ring the bell, Uncle Peter had expired in his arms.

The wailing of the servants, that night was not so much for the master, dead in the house, as for the young mistress, whom they were never more to see. The story flew abroad, early in the morning, and the whole neighborhood came with sympathy and aid.

The account of Margaret's runaway marriage with a foreigner went with that of her accidental death; altogether the tragic interest which gathered about Branthope Villa, was powerful enough to keep the community in a state of excitement; and many there were who, looking upon young Maxwell with curious and pitying eyes, saw so much trouble and unhappiness in his face as to conclude that his cousin had jilted him, and broken his heart by doing so, and by her early death. For he would have been more caloused in feeling and experienced in wrong-doing than he was, had he not felt the consequences of his selfish conduct intolerable. Two deaths within a fortnight, both as truly to be laid at his door, as if he had planned and executed them!

He was, indeed, wretched enough. He fell away in flesh, his eyes had the look of eyes which do not sleep; he was moody, restless, pallid—everybody said how deeply he took to heart his double loss—he felt it even more than was to be expected, seeing that he had now become, by Margaret's death, and his being next of kin, sole heir to Branthope Villa, and all Uncle Peter's moneys and estates.

He, who had done so much to bring about such a result, would have given up all, and have gone back under the yoke of unpaid debts, could he have replaced his young cousin in her home, as he had won her from it, and have

seen his uncle back in that wearisome sick-chamber, out of which he had startled him forever. He was not a murderer at heart—not even a robber or dishonest man; he had been led away, by the temptations of an easy life, and the weak promptings of a selfish, luxurious nature, to consent to a wrong which he persuaded himself was not so mean and wicked as it really was. Now, he saw it in its true light—too late for repentance to avail.

Business kept him for some weeks, the most of the time at the Villa, and when he finally left it, for the winter, in care of the housekeeper, it was as its undisputed master. Uncle Peter's property was found to be more instead of less, as is generally the case, than was currently reported. His prudent operations had been successful, and there was plenty of money in the bank, as well as much invested in profitable ways which brought in a handsome income.

Branthope, with his pleasure-loving temperament, had nothing to do but to lay the ghosts which haunted him. He was obliged to do it, in self-defense, he was so miserable—obliged to become almost recklessly gay, to keep constantly in society, to be always in the company of good fellows, of bright ladies, in order to shut out the pictures which arose before him in solitude. He was quite successful in his attempts to forget and be happy. After a time he became really what at first he had only affected, gay and care-free; only, at intervals, he would have visions, and at night, frequently, startling and unpleasant dreams.

CHAPTER X.

THE CREW OF THE SALLY ANN.

In the mean time, what of Margaret? Not drowned, not found, as our readers must have foreseen. She was awakened from that sleep floating upon clouds of ether-down, by a rude thump against some massive piece of timber. Involuntarily she reached out her hand. The struggle for the life she had resigned began over again. She was choking and cramping—she was sinking. As she stretched out her arm, she felt and clasped a wooden beam. She clung to it, got her other arm over it, and held on, with her head above the foul and freezing water which moaned and seethed and still rose higher about her—for the tide was setting in. Presently she had recovered sufficient breath to enable her to crawl, with a great, disheartening effort, upon the beam, and to cling with cold, numb fingers, to another cross-piece above. She knew very well where she was. Under the dock! Dark waters underneath, slimy walls about her, heavy wooden planks above. Ah, what a coffin! She shuddered with the thought, and with the bitter cold.

When she was a trifle more composed, less water in her ears and mouth, she heard the tramping of feet above her, saw the gleam of a lantern through a crack in her prison-ceiling, knew that they were looking for her, that by crying out she could yet be saved. She pressed her trembling lips more firmly together, and was dumb.

She crouched in that awful place until voices and lights were gone. A long time! They had given her up at last, thank God! Now for courage to meet a lingering death. Oh, why had she not sunk at once!—then all would have been over. The water rose, and almost washed her from her slippery hold. She was so wet, so chilled. Time wore on. The tide was still rising. It came over her, where she clung. She wondered if she might not struggle up to the cross-piece to which she was holding on with her hands. She cautiously made the effort and succeeded. No sooner was she established in this new hold on life, than she saw stars twinkling above her—a piece of the blue sky. Before, all had been dark—dark as the grave. After a moment's study she made out, with a sudden leap of the heart, that part of a plank was missing from the flooring of the pier. If she could but reach to crawl out through that, she might yet be saved—might fly from the man who called her his wife, might creep and crawl by night back to Branthope Villa, and there be hidden and protected.

With the hope came a renewal of her ebbing strength. Very carefully, slipping and clinging, she got upon her feet, put her head through the opening, which was on a level, now, with her waist, and looked about her. There was no one to assist—or betray. Using an elbow for a lever, she lifted herself; her knee was upon the flooring—one more effort, and she stood upon the pier. Saved!

She had not felt the wind in that terrible shelter below there. Now it blew about her, flapping her wet garments, which almost froze to her limbs. She realized that a few moments of such exposure would render her helpless, unless she greatly exerted herself. High clouds were hurrying across the sky, obscuring the stars one moment, to pass from them the next. The light was faint and uncertain, but she groped her way off the pier, until she came into a street which she supposed to be West street. She began to run, to keep from freezing; but whenever she came near a lamp, she was hurried by with caution, and when, rarely, she saw a policeman approaching on his beat, she hid in areas, or behind sheds or lumber-piles, until he had passed. To seek assistance of one of these was, probably, to be given back into the power of that man. She had no set project of escape—only a dim idea that if she could struggle on she might reach the open country before daybreak, and ask for warmth and food at some humble house, where her identity would not be suspected.

She had far greater powers of endurance than most girls of the present day, her free country life and her inherited English constitution having insured her that; but the wind numbed her, and her wet clothes were heavy as if made of iron.

Still she struggled and stumbled on, until, at last, upon the approach of an officer down the street with a bull's-eye open in his forehead, she fled out upon the pier into a large lumber-yard, where she lost herself amid high piles of boards, and when she attempted to come out on the street again, found herself on the river-side, with gaunt skeletons of masts standing against the sky, and quiet flocks of vessels crowded side by side, locked up there, as if they were at their winter moorings. Her eyes were dim by this time, and her brain numb as her feet and hands. Her very heart was deathly cold, and when she went to turn she became confused. Presently she was conscious that a light, like that of a lamp, was shining somewhere, and she stumbled toward it; but before she quite reached it, she fell, and after that she knew no more for some hours.

When Margaret again unclosed her eyes, the daylight came dimly into the place where she was. It was a queer place; she could not make it out, and she lay quietly in her bewilderment, wondering, and, by degrees, remembering. She lay on a sort of shelf on one side of a room about eight feet wide by twelve long; there was another shelf above and one beneath

her, in which she heard a little child tossing and talking and teasing to be taken up. There was a very tiny stove in one corner, upon which stood a tin coffee-pot; a small table in another corner, spread with the necessities of a very modest breakfast; a cradle was crowded close upon the table, and, indeed, the whole little apartment had a sadly crowded aspect, containing, as it did, the furniture and equipments of an entire family of four, inclusive of sleeping arrangements—which crowded aspect was still further increased by the ridiculously unnecessary largeness and fatness of the woman, who, sitting on a deck-stool, with a fretful baby in her lap, seemed to fill and overflow the space, and take up so much more room than she was entitled to. Yet she did it in that good-natured manner that no one, surely, could begrudge it to her. Margaret, through her half-open lids, saw the woman's dimpled, wandering glance went up to the windows, to find if the scene outside might betray her whereabouts; the windows, like everything else, were queer—only a pane of glass in height, but broad enough, and very near the low ceiling. Through them she saw the sky and the outlines of two or three masts of vessels—the last things she had seen as she stumbled on, unconscious, the previous night.

The sight brought back everything, and she groaned aloud.

"Lord-a-mercy!" cried the woman, jumping up so suddenly as to have forgotten her own baby, which would have fallen upon the floor had not the kindly cradle caught and held it—"so, you've come to, have you, Miss! An' Ezekiel sayin' you was clean gone. Sartin, now, how do you feel?"

"I hardly know," said Margaret, faintly, but trying to smile, for the woman's hearty voice had a cheerful sound.

"Don't speak agin' till you've drunk this—every drop on it—I've tried to get it down you when you was as good as dead, but I couldn't get you to swallow much"—and she brought a tumbler of hot spiced whisky-punch, which had been kept covered on the stove-hearth, lifted her patient's head, and forced the draught upon her by the power of her superior will, all the time rattling on, as fast as she could comfortably speak, being a little short-breathed.

"Wasn't it a mussy the baby was sick last night, an' I got up and struck a light to see what was the matter with the poor little thing—she's a-cuttin' her first teeth, Miss—an' kep' up the fire to make her some catnip tea, an' was a-settin' an' a-rockin' her, an' Zeke snorin', for it don't keep him awake to have the young ones cry—an' a blessing, too, he bein' out to work all day—an' I hear somethin' tumble agin' the door, like a big dog, or what not, and scart me so, I hollered to Zeke, an' made him get up to open it to drive the dog away—an' there, law sus, it wasn't no dog, but you, Miss, that was, and that cold, actually friz to death! I reckon Zeke was glad he turned out, when he seen what was up. But we give you up for dead more'n once. Lal I had a night of it, with my sick baby, and with you; but she's better now, and I'm right glad she was took so bad just at that time, for if I'd been sound asleep I shouldn't 'a' heard you fall, and you'd 'a' friz solid afore mornin'."

"Perhaps that would have been the best thing which could have happened," murmured Margaret.

"Oh, don't say that now! It's your bounden duty to live as long as God lets ye, and you musn't be too impatient. Laws! you've just begun life. Not a day over eighteen, I'll be bound. How come you in that fix, now, if you've no objections to tell? Of course we know you was in the river, but how come you there? Accident or—socioide?" The merry blue eyes shut up into a twinkling line in the excess of the good woman's curiosity. The poor girl could hardly help smiling, even in her misery, at the intense inquisitiveness of the Yankee face, so good-natured and benevolent at the same time.

"If it were suicide would I have tried so hard to save myself?" asked Margaret, prudently—already the fear, destined to be the lion in her path, had sprung up and faced her—the fear that Mr. Martinique would hear of her safety and claim her.

"So! that's so. We thought—Zeke an' me—p'raps it might be. You was dressed so nice, an' so young an' handsome. We said, to one another—there's a romantic mystery here. Of course, if it ain't socioide, you'd like us to let your friends know, the sooner the better!"

"Alas! I have no friends!"

"There!" exclaimed the woman, exultingly, turning to a rough little man, as thin and small as she was large and dimpled, who at that moment slipped in the door. "I told you so! There's a romantic mystery here, as you live, Zeke."

"Bear a hand, Sally—don't you see she's slippin' her anchor agin'! Where's the grog?" Margaret had again become unconscious. It was some time before she revived. When she could be left a little while to herself, the hostess comforted her screaming baby, and her husband, having dressed the other child, put the coffee and a plate of buckwheat cakes on the table, and the family ate breakfast.

When they had finished the meal, of which they must have stood in need, as their night's exertions, the woman brought a cup of coffee and a soaked cracker to her patient, who ate and drank quite eagerly, and was refreshed.

"Where am I?" she asked, looking again about the queer place.

"On board the Sally Ann," answered the man, laughing a little, and with an air as if proud of the fact.

"Where bound?" gasped Margaret, faintly, "not to—oh, not to South America?"

The little man shook with laughter, and his dimpled spouse shook, too, as he replied: "To South America! Lor' bless you, no! the Sally Ann confines herself mostly to the raging canawl, except w'en she comes down to visit of some nother to visit the city. She's bound, now, to stay where she is, till navigation opens, an' that's all she's bound for. South America, I s'wore! to think of the Sally Ann attempting that, mother!"

"Mother!" laughed, and then she squinted up her eyes again into that twinkling line, as she turned to the strange visitor.

"What under the sun put that into your head? Was yer a-calculatin' to go there, or was yer afraid you might be obliged to?"

"I don't wish to go there," cried Margaret, faintly. "Oh, no, not for the world. I'll tell you sometime—this afternoon, perhaps, when I'm well enough to sit up."

"Yes, yes—all right. Don't you go to tirin' yourself out, talkin'. I've got yer wet things a-dryin', an' I'll press 'em off yer body, an' yer can fix yourself quite decent before your friends comes after you. Now, I jest tell you, the best thing fer ye is to take a good long nap. I'll try and git baby to sleep 't the same time, so's we ken hev it quiet."

"Oh," said Margaret, "I don't wish to go to sleep—I'm afraid to."

"Afraid of us?" asked the little man, crim-

soning with indignation. "Do you s'pose the owners o' the Sally Ann would 'a' left us to take keer of her—in full charge of her, without payin' a cent o' rent for our accommodations, if we was that kind o' folks! If you had the hull Bank o' Boston in yer pocket, we shouldn't tech it!"

"I beg your pardon, a thousand times. I didn't mean that, oh, no! I would trust you with the Bank of Boston, if I had it—which I have not!" smiling sadly. "But I'm so afraid I shall be found—discovered—by those who, doubtless, are looking for me. They will search everywhere; the police will know it, and, oh, I would rather die this hour than fall again into their hands. It was to get away from them that I sprung into the river. They, probably, believe that I am drowned. But they will try to be certain of it. They are rich—they will buy the assistance of others—the police will be on the watch. If any one hears of my being here I shall be taken away. Oh, clasping her hands, "if there were any cellar dark enough to hide me! No, I dare not sleep. I must keep on the watch; for if I hear or see them coming I shall kill myself. They never—never—never shall take me alive!" She sunk back on her pillow, exhausted, looking piteously at her new friends with those beautiful eyes, whose pleadings they had not hearts hard enough to withstand.

Nobody shall leave ye agin' your will while 'm master o' the Sally Ann," said the man, throwing back his shoulders, and glowing with an expression like that of a commodore on deck, and about to engage with the enemy.

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"An' look-a-here, my beauty. You jest go to sleep as sound as you like. Not a body shall set foot on this craft this day, 'ceptin' them already here. I'll stand watch all day, if ye say so—though, Lord knows, we ain't likely to be troubled with visitors, are we, Sally?"

Sally dimpled all over, as she usually did when addressed, saying:

"We ain't tied up but a fortnight, and we don't know a soul about us yet. You kin sleep as peaceful here as if you was in the moon. If anybody comes inquiren' round 'em sharp enough to turn 'em off. No need, Zeke, o' your givin' up yer day's work to stan' watch. I'll take keer o' the Sally Ann, and all on board."

"If it's safe to leave me here," spoke Margaret, a little anxiously, "I wish you would go out. You will probably hear what is said about the accident; and please bring me a paper, if there's anything about a lady's being drowned in the river, to-day."

"Jest as the windmill decides. That's my rule o' conduct. And, Sally, keep a sharp eye out, and if yer sees the enemy bearin' down, clear the decks for action. Keep the door of the cabin locked; and, law, Miss, if you'd feel easier, pull down them little curtains, and there you are; shet up like a bag o' gold in a chest. Nobody'd never guess you was there, if they come right in. Mother'll put your clothes out o' sight as soon as they're dry, an' you kin lie as snug as a kernel in a nut."

When he was ready to go forth for the day his wife followed him out, and as she lowered beside him on the deck of the canal-boat, her whole face was illuminated, in all its folds and dimples, as she whispered, emphatically:

"There's some romantic mystery, I tell you, Zeke, about that young lady. Nothin' common, nuther. To think o' her bein' led to the Sally Ann, an' I so fond o' 'em!"

"Fond o' what?" asked her partner, perplexed.

"Romantic mysteries. Why, it's as good as a novel, an' a good deal more real, a-havin' in her one of our very cabin. I shan't begrudge her a little trouble, it's so nice to have it happen here—but I'm dyin' to know the climax."

"Well, don't you bother her with too many questions. As soon as she sees you're real friendly she'll let it all out, no doubt. I'll come home early—like as not I shall learn all about her, in the papers, or from the p'lice."

"But you won't betray her, Zeke?"

"Not I! The master o' the Sally Ann don't betray one o' the softer set who has confided in him. Sally, you know that!"

"Yes, I do. An' bring a chicken, Zeke, to make her some broth. Between you an' I, the sign-post, I don't reckon on her leavin' us to-day. I see a fever comin' on."

"That's pesky bad for her, poor young thing. But you're a purty good nurse, mother. Doctor her up as well as you kin, an' I'll not forget the chicken."

He went away, and Mrs. Sally, returning to the cabin, heroically suppressed her inclination to talk, and, drawing the curtain before the berth in which the stranger lay, took her baby in her lap, and sung it to sleep to the music of the "Bay o' Barbary." Her other child played quietly about her feet, but she sung two children to sleep with the same touching ditty; for Margaret, whose brain already began to wander a little, dreamed that she was a babe and was being rocked to sleep on her mother's breast, and thus dreaming, sunk into a heavy, but not healthy slumber.

She slept until late in the afternoon. When, finally, she unclosed her languid eyes, the long strips of windows, the low ceiling, the little stove and the large woman, were all as if she had never seen them before, and after that, for several days, her memory only came to her at intervals, during which she would so piteously implore her humble friends not to summon a physician, to let *any one* see her, that they, albeit much alarmed at her condition, unwillingly consented, Mrs. Sally bringing to bear all her New England knowledge of herb-teas and bitters, and much weighed down by a sense of responsibility, as well as an intense desire to know the "climax."

At about the tenth day Margaret broke the fever-chain, cleared the cobwebs of delirium from her brain, and was once more herself. Her young and vigorous constitution now asserted itself in her rapid recovery.

"The papers—all the daily papers, since I came here," were the first things she asked for.

Zekiel brought her a pile of them; but the letters swam before her eyes, and she had to take a day or two's regimen of chicken-broth and egg-nogg before she could begin the task of going through with them.

"It is all right," she said to Mrs. Sally, who sat, baby in lap, watching her with her twinkling eyes drawn up in a line; "they believe me dead—they believe that they have buried me. That is what I most desire. Henceforth I am dead—to myself, to them, to the past. I must begin like one just born—a new name, a new life!" then she burst into tears, not at thought of this, but because she had learned, through those papers, of her dear uncle's sudden death.

She sobbed so violently, in her weak state, that Mrs. Sally put down the baby and brought the "cambré-bottle."

"It don't hurt me to cry, Mrs. Griggs; I feel better now."

"But you shouldn't overdo yourself, Mrs. Martinique," responded the good woman, half-shutting her eyes.

Margaret sat straight up in bed; a hot flush rushed over her pale face, and her eyes flashed lightning.

"Don't call me by that name," she said, passionately; "it is mine, I suppose, but it was fastened on me by fraud, and I refuse it. You know, of course, all that the papers can reveal, Mrs. Griggs. I am Mrs. Martinique—drowned, buried, my husband sailed for his southern home, my uncle killed by the news of my death, my cousin left sole heir to the estate—thus the papers have it, and thus it is. Mind you, it is, and must ever be. That I am not dead and buried is no one's affair but my own. I choose to have it thought that I am thus disposed of."

"Mrs. Griggs, circumstances have placed me in your power. You have been like a sister to me, and your husband has been like a brother. In return, I will explain to you why I did not choose to go to South America with Mr. Martinique." The twinkling eyes shone brightly through the half-shut lids. Little Hi-rum was boxed on the ear for attempting to blow his punny whistle, and the baby's mouth was stopped with its natural stopper, while Mrs. Griggs listened to as much as Margaret thought necessary to explain.

When the sad story was ended, tears were dripping from the twinkling eyes and dropping on the dimpled cheeks—tears of compassion for the young lady, and of indignation at those who had plotted against her happiness—but through all her intense sympathy there broke a ray of triumph, as she exclaimed:

"That's a climax, now, a-worth a-comin' to! I've always felt twould be my lot to be mixed up with a reg'lar tragedy yet, as I've often said to Zeke—an' here it is, sure enough!"

Mrs. Griggs, during that portion of her life spent peacefully on the calm bosom of the great canal, had been mistress of many quiet hours which otherwise might have been, to say the least, monotonous, had she not filled them and thrilled them with the perusal of many exciting works of fiction, from the "Mysteries of Udolpho," down to the "Gun-maker of Moscow," and being naturally, despite of her large size and her excess of dimples, as sentimental as the thinnest old maid, she could bring to match her, was always on the look-out for romantic mysteries in real life. She was really happy in having, at last, one laid at her very door—brought there, as she herself felt certain, by a "circumstantial Providence."

"Wild horses shall never tear it from me," she assured the girl, who, again pale and trembling, had sunk back on her pillow, after the conclusion of the brief account of herself; and the good woman, stooping to kiss the white cheek, saw, in her mind's eye, herself, as she had been, in an immense barge, laden with this weighty and important secret, which the wild horses of the tow-path in vain endeavored to drag from her.

"If Senor Martinique was to come, himself, with his hands chock full of Brazilian diamonds, I couldn't be tempted to open my mouth—neither could 'Zekiel. Laws, no! don't think we could lend ourselves to such a downright conspiracy. We'll keep your secret, an' do all we kin to help you. But, la, now, my dear, what on earth be you going to do?"

Margaret did not know—she had not had time to think. Mrs. Griggs interrupted her to tell her to take plenty of time—the Sally Ann was her home till she could provide herself with a better. Then she advised her to "turn up," and take back her uncle's property from her cousin, who had no right to it; but this, to Margaret, was the most impossible of things. She would rather resign all, earning her own living, henceforth, than to allow her cousin to know of her existence, since his first step would be to recall Mr. Martinique.

Ignorant that she might appeal to the law for protection from a husband whose right to her was consummated through fraud, her little friends were equally ignorant that she might safely take steps for her own release—and into such a fever, almost spasm of terror, did the mere thought of encountering either of these two men again throw her, that they dared not advise her to openly brave the consequences. Her only idea was to hide her existence from these two; and her friend's only idea, by force of sympathy, became the same.

CHAPTER XI.

OUT OF THE WORLD, YET IN IT.

As she rapidly recovered, life, in that close and crowded little cabin, became a wearisome thing to Margaret. Often she regretted that she had been so cowardly as to flee from death when it waited, so close at hand, to release her. It was easier to sleep under those sheets of ice, in that moaning and tossing bed, than to face the new experience which awaited her.

No human beings could be kinder than the master of the Sally Ann and his buxom mate; the little boy was fascinated with the young lady and her charming stories; even the baby cried to go to her; they shared with her their fire and food—but it can be imagined that her surroundings, to a delicately-bred girl, would be almost intolerable. Still worse, she was partaking of their hospitality, without the means of rewarding them; for when Margaret hastily changed her dress, on that Sabbath evening, to go to the church with Branthope, she had left her purse in the pocket of her traveling cloak. She had her watch—which, being securely fastened in her belt, had remained safe during her struggles in the water—a plain gold brooch, and one or two inexpensive rings, besides her wedding-ring. That, much as she loathed the sight of it, she was resolved to keep. Since it might be possible that, some day, that man would have her in his power, she was resolved to preserve the proofs of their legal marriage. She knew there was a record in the church where they were married; she had, also, the certificate which he had thrust into her hand, and which, mechanically, she had placed in her pocket before alighting from the carriage. Mrs. Sally had found it and dried it, and pressed it carefully between the leaves of the Bible, where it still lay, discolored, but legible.

Margaret might have spared the watch, and would have done so willingly, notwithstanding that it was a gift from Uncle Peter, and now her only keepsake from him; but her dread of discovery made her afraid to have it offered for sale. It was marked with her monogram, and might, very possibly, lead to inquiries and detection. Her rings and pin Mrs. Griggs sold for her, and bought, with the money, materials for embroidery, and as soon as she was able to sit up, the forlorn, but resolute girl, in this

curious prison in which she voluntarily immured herself, began to do exquisite needle-work, which her hostess disposed of at the fancy-stores. The sum she was enabled to earn by constant application was very small, but it enabled her to pay for board all that it was really worth, and to buy herself a pair of shoes, and a plain delaine dress.

Mrs. Sally was not at all expert with the needle, and it was a great comfort to her to have this "romantic" young lady finish up the set of summer shirts she had begun for 'Zekiel, and make the baby's frocks so prettily, while she devoted herself to the unlimited perusal of all the "mysteries" she could lay her hands upon.

It was a weary, dreary life to Margaret—relieved only by the absolute good-humor and even affection of her humble friends; she knew they liked to have her there; indeed, Mrs. Sally declared it was like a constant play at the Bowers to have her before their very eyes, and that she was paying for her accommodations; but it could not be denied that she still further crowded the tiny cabin, whose chief characteristic was that of being crowded, and which continually ran over at the door, and seemed about to bulge out at the sides, like a picnic basket that is bursting its lid with over-packing.

"Zekiel always declared there was room to spare, an innocent fiction on his part, forgiveable, under the circumstances; while, as for Mrs. Sally, she often dropped her book in the midst of its most thrilling passages, to gaze upon the young, noble, and beautiful face bent over that delicate embroidery, which was there, ever, like a picture before her, transforming the dingy cabin of the laid-up canal-boat into a *salon* of splendor and magnificence to her admiring eyes.

Poor Margaret! her only relief was sometimes to stand at the little windows, overlooking the near line of "baby's duds," which were in a chronic state of waiting and happiness, ever the first thing to meet her view on the deck outside—to look beyond these, and the silent vessels moored about, a little ways up the river, to the wooded heights on the opposite side, which looked a little like home, and to watch the masses of broken ice come sailing down on their adventurous voyage to the ocean.

But whenever she thought about going out into the world again, she shrank and shivered. She was foolishly and needlessly afraid; but the sudden shock and terror of that first dreadful night had unstrung her nerves, and made her constantly on the look-out for surprises and snares. Like a person who has, in a moment of peaceful enjoyment, seen the earth open about him, or had his house fall upon him, she could never again feel perfectly safe.

However, she could not always remain absolutely a prisoner. As she recovered her full strength, she grew also in courage, coming, after a few weeks, to slip out in the afternoon, in her plain dress, with a veil over her face, to carry her work to the stores. The walk was necessary to her health, and she enjoyed it keenly.

The only person she had to avoid was her cousin—excepting chance meeting with her country acquaintances—since Mr. Martinique, she knew, had sailed for a far country. That he might return before many months, was a question of the future; at present he was away, and she felt less desperately beset; but, from her experience of her cousin's kindness, she felt that for him to become aware of her existence, was to have the senior informed of it. To give up his possession of her estate would not be possible to one of his selfish character; she had reason to dread the steps he might take to prevent such a consequence, should he learn of her being alive.

The dislike which Margaret felt for Mr. Martinique must have been heartfelt, instinctive, strong as life itself, to have upheld her in her present resolution. Daily, and uncomplainingly, like the poorest seamstress, she toiled, and meekly took the miserable rewards of her taste and skill, to pay for a seat at the table in the cabin of the Sally Ann, while Branthope Villa—all her own—stood desolate and empty, sadly shrouding the costly pictures, the luxurious furniture, the silver table-service, the rich wardrobe, in the midst of which she should have reigned, lovely and happy. Not only that, but vast estates, smiling under tropic skies, awaited her coming as their mistress, and mines and warehouses were there in which she had her right of dower as the wife of their owner; but she preferred, to all these, soul-freedom, and the little cabin which assured it to her.

Once, some time in February, as Margaret came out of a fancy-store in Canal street, it being almost twilight, and her veil as usual drawn over her face, she met her cousin Branthope. He passed her by, without a glance at the modest sewing-girl, jauntily and airily, and handsomely dressed, with an increased air of fashion and wealth about him, and only the narrow band of crabs on his hat to hint of tragedies so recently enacted. She did not know, until she reached the shelter of the Sally Ann, toward which he almost flew, how much the sight of that man, whom she had once so fondly loved, had shaken her. Once safe within the cabin, she sunk upon a chair with trembling limbs, buried her pale face in her hands, and sat there more than an hour, without moving or speaking, except to say, at first, in answer to Mrs. Sally's anxious inquiries:

"I met my cousin; but he did not recognize me."

To see that handsome, audacious, selfish face, was to be transported back into the past. Her life at Branthope Villa, where she had loved, worshipped, with a young girl's idolatry, her unworthy cousin, returned upon her with its sweetness, freshness, and safety; so did that Sabbath evening when she, trembling and fearing, and yet unexpectably happy, had gone with this persuasive lover to the solemn altar, and had promised there to be his wife with a willing joy, of which he had made such a terrible mockery. As she thought of it now, and recalled how careless and haughty and self-assured he had been, this evening, as he passed her by, all that had been sweet in her nature grew bitter—that which had been love, the fondest and most yielding, turned into hate, the sternest and most implacable. She did more now than despise Branthope—she hated him!—hated the sight of his gayety and his good fortune, and jaunty vanity. Never, after that, for one moment, did any return of her old affection for him soften the hardness of her heart toward him. She had loved him, as not one woman in ten thousand is capable of loving; and she hated him with an equal power.

Hers was not an ordinary character. It was no tame voice and purposeless glance which which she said, when, after an hour's silence, she raised her head from her hands, and turned, rising to her feet and lifting her hand:

"I hate my cousin, Mrs. Griggs."

"Good Lord, my dear," responded Mrs. Sally, "now I never did see the best of that! If you was a rigger Lady Macbeth, you couldn't

make my blood run no colder. You'd make a drefful fine actress, Miss Margaret, an' no mistake. Why don't you offer yourself to the managers? They'd snap you up in a minute. Why, do you know, I believe I'd 'a' bin an actress myself, if my finger didn't stand in the way. I'm too fat for the tragedy parts, which is why I naturally take to 'em. But you! Look at her, Zeke! to her husband, who had just come in to tea. "Ain't she well adapted to the stage?"

The young lady did present a striking effect, with her bonnet dangling down her shoulders, her superb black hair following the bonnet, her face like marble, her eyes blazing, her expression full of the passion her words had breathed.

"Ah, yes!" she murmured, coming down from her high tragedy with a mournful smile; "I have thought of it myself, Mrs. Griggs. But I am cut off from that, as from everything else, by the danger of discovery."

Margaret had thought a good deal of the drama as a means of earning a living, for her vivid impressions of her first night at the opera still remained; but the fact that certain betrayal must follow her appearance in New York, had held her desire in check. More than once she had resolved to endeavor to sell her watch for enough to pay her expenses to London, where she would feel more secure in beginning a new career; and this night, as she lay long awake, she pondered the plan in all its aspects, and resolved to carry it into effect very soon.

It was a week before Margaret again ventured from the shelter of the Sally Ann. But Mrs. Griggs was not very well. The work was promised, and she set out to deliver it herself, purposely delaying her walk until as near dark as was prudent. It was not pleasant to be out late when her homeward way lay amid such perils as surrounded the canal-boat, lying as it did, moored to its dock, in a part of the city frequented by sailors, longshoremen, workers in coal and lumber-yards, and by a very rough working-class generally, as well as particularly by occasional hard characters. The street lamps had been some time lighted, when she, having been detained a little while at the store, and by making some purchases for Mrs. Sally, hurrying along with as business-like an air as she could assume, carrying her basket with its parcels of tea and sugar, turned into the lumber-yard which lay between the street and the Sally Ann. The regular employees of the yard knew her as an inmate of the canal-boat, although they had never seen her unveiled face; Margaret was not afraid of them, and did not think seriously of it, as a man came round from behind a pile of boards, and advanced so that they must meet in the path. There was a lamp not far away, but they were not in sight from the street, as the fellow walked slowly past, whistling and eying her so sharply that she, in turn, regarded him. Her veil was up now, as she could not see without, and as they passed each other, the gleam of the lamp fell directly upon her face. It immediately affected her, though she really did not think of it, as if she had seen the man before—how or where was as shadowy as the impression itself. He was a disagreeable-looking person, with reddish, unkempt beard, an ugly mouth, and malicious eyes. Scarcely had she passed when she felt herself caught about the waist, and a rough hand turned her face to the light of the lamp. She attempted to scream, but her voice died in her dry throat.

"By hokey! here's a sell! so you ain't dead and drowned, after all, my pretty Miss Martin, or whatever it is!"

She recognized him then—the driver to whom she had appealed on the dock, on the night of her marriage. The sword, suspended by a hair, had fallen—and so soon! but she made a brave effort for her salvation, and looked him in the face with affected surprise. "Let me go!" she said, as soon as she could command her voice; "I am Mrs. Griggs' girl, and she wants me home with these things. I'll call the police if you don't let me go."

"The same voice, too," he replied, coolly; "a scart voice, as before, and one not to be mistaken. Oh, yes! I'll let you go," releasing his hold on her; "I wouldn't hurt a lady like you for the world. All I want is to let you go home."

"That you may follow me!" she exclaimed, setting down her basket in despair.

"Precisely," was the hateful answer; "there's no law against it."

"Then I will keep walking all night," she said, desperately.

"All right. I can keep that up as long as you can. But, good Lord! what's the sense! Now I've got my eye on you once, you needn't think but what I'm going to keep it there. I've played sharp on older and wiser ones 'an you. Bless you, I've been in all kinds o' little games, and generally win."

"But what do you want of me?" asked she, trying to appear indifferent.

"Oh, I read the papers! I ain't ignorant of the fact that the pretty bride of the rich gentleman went overboard and was drowned. The papers said 'by accident,' but I know better. I saw through it in the twinkling of an eye."

"Stupid!" says I, and I did feel a little sorry. In fact, I've been quite grieved about it—can't tell you how relieved I feel to find it all a mistake, and she alive and handsome as ever. She's Mrs. Griggs' girl, is she—ah, ha! Well, I don't pretend I'm quite at the bottom of this yet; but it won't take long to get there. That rich senior, now, who gave me a double-eagle to drive fast and keep my mouth shut, would pay a pretty sum, now, to any one as would give him the news that he wasn't a widower—a cool five thousand, if I stuck for it."

"Oh," cried Margaret, "if I had as much, I would willingly give it to you to hold your peace, and let me alone, and she burst into tears."

"Ex-actly. And he'd give as much to find you as you would to keep away from him. I'll be bound. He adored you, ma'am. I could see that with half an eye. How happy I shall make him!"

"He is gone—far away! he will not come back. No word or letter of yours can reach him. You do not know where to address him!"

"There's a nice young man from whom I can get his address—the one who stood up with you. I know him."

"Have you no mercy?" cried Margaret, in agony.

"I ain't no money," said the man, doggedly; "and I want some desperate bad. Besides, in my judgment, there wouldn't be no harm in taking a lady away from a place like this, and turnin' her over to her lawful husband, who loves her, and will cover her with velvet and jewels. I'd like to be hurt in that way."

"Allow me to be the judge. I was married to that man by fraud—I supposed I was being married to somebody else—a man I was engaged to, and who took me to the church. It was cruel—wicked. I am not, in heart or

truth, his wife. Oh, do not betray me to him! If I had money, I would give it all to you."

"Ha!" rubbing his whiskers, reflectively; "thought you was getting married to t'other one, hey! really, a very good joke. Quite a little farce for such nice gentlemen to be engaged in! The other one will be willing to pay, too, then, to keep the affair quiet. Upon my honor, I've hit on quite a lead."

"I did not say it was the other one whom I expected to marry," stammered poor Margaret, shrinking from this dreaded person, while feeling the net closing about her.

"Certainly not," with a wink; "I guessed it, for who wouldn't?"

"You need not trouble yourself to give information," said the lady, then, haughtily, even under the pressure of sickening fear; "I can do what I attempted once before. I can kill myself, and I assuredly will, before I will fall into his power."

"Perhaps you can buy me off," suggested the other.

"I have property. But I can not claim it without betraying myself. All I have to spare now, is a very costly watch."

"Bah! Property, hey?—in the other's hands, of course," again reflecting, but his reflections were cut short by the appearance of two of the police, stealing cautiously out of the shadow, down one of the aisles formed by the lumber, at the sight of whom, her unwelcome companion made a tremendous bound in the opposite direction, darted into obscurity, and was gone, with the officers in pursuit.

It was evident that he had been skulking in the lumber-yard to hide from them.

"I hope they will find him, and keep him," murmured Margaret, as, sick at heart, utterly miserable and despondent, she took up her basket, and went down on board the Sally Ann.

"La, suzi! don't tell me! suthin's happened," remarked Mrs. Griggs, as her boarder, after laying aside her bonnet, sat down to the table, and pretended to eat, while unable to swallow even the cup of warm tea which she so much needed. "I hope you ain't heard no news, Miss Mar—Lucille."

Margaret had changed her name, some time ago, and both she and her friends were attempting to become accustomed to the new one.

"He ain't back, is he?" whispered the master of the Sally Ann, putting the back of his hand up to his mouth, and speaking as mysteriously as if he might be somewhere in the cabin, and in danger of overhearing the conversation.

"Oh, my! what a climax that would be!" cried his wife.

"Not quite so bad as that," and the young lady began to cry in that quiet, repressed way so sad to see; "but I have been discovered by the driver of the hack who took us from the church that night, and he threatens to inform Mr. Martinique and my cousin. He will do it, because he can extort money from them. I see very plainly, my dear friends, that I shall have to leave your kind protection. Oh, where shall I go next?"

"I can't bear to listen to your talk of going, Miss Lucille—I can't indeed. We love you, and we're proud of you—proud to have a romantic mystery on board the Sally Ann. 'Twon't happen to us twice in a lifetime, I know. Where's that bad man, a-comin' in, like a bandit in a play, a-makin' trouble? Does he know you're here, in this cabin?"

"I am not certain. It appears the officers were after him, and he was obliged to run off. But he will find out everything which he does not already know. Oh, I hope they arrested him!"

"Well, you keep as quiet as you can," said Zeke, earnestly desiring to comfort her. "You keep close aboard ship; an' to-morrow I'll find out all about that feller. I'll question the police."

Margaret, or Lucille, as we shall hereafter call her, while it suited her to bear that name, passed a wakeful, wretched night. Her peace of mind was completely unsettled; never again, for a moment, could she feel safe. The next day she bent, pale and nervous, steadily over her needle, but every sound made her start. To please her, Mrs. Griggs kept the cabin-door bolted and formed herself into a guard. At evening, when Zeke returned from his work on the docks, he was enabled to give Lucille the name of her tormentor, and to announce that, at present, he was in prison, and would probably be sent up for a few weeks for assault and battery on a fellow hackman. Gus Nichols, although driving a carriage, as the ostensible means of making a living, was suspected, by the police, to be a person of bad habits, whose ways ought to be kept under surveillance. Indeed, he had once been arrested for robbing a passenger, but the charge was not proved, and he was acquitted. That he was quarrelsome and brutal, he had proved often enough; in fact, he had been skulking yesterday to escape the consequences of nearly killing a man with whom he had quarreled.

Lucille breathed somewhat freer when she heard that he was certainly under arrest; and the inmates of the cabin waited with even a sharper interest than the prisoner himself, to learn, by the daily papers, if he were convicted of the offense charged against him. When it was ascertained that he was sent to Blackwell's for two months, Lucille accepted it as the deserved accept of a respite. For two months she might enjoy a partial security. It was evident that Nichols did not know the address of Sonor Martinique, and it was unlikely that he would obtain it while in prison.

She did not know the persistent nature of the fellow.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 351.)

"Unseen and Unseen."

BY HENRI MONTCALEM.

HERE are two letters which will explain themselves and show, better than I can perhaps, the characters of the hero and heroine of this story.

MR. JOHN BROWN TO MISS JANE BANCROFT.
DEAR MISS: I begin in this awkward way because I do not even know your name; I enclose this letter to my uncle's executor, requesting him to forward it to you. The very remarkable terms of my uncle's will must be my excuse for addressing you as I am about to do.

It seems that if you and I are willing to take each other for better or worse, having never even seen each other's face, we shall together inherit my uncle's property; if not, it goes to found an orphan asylum.

NOW, WHEREAS,
I do not believe in orphan asylums any way; the money all goes to the trustees, and precious little good the orphans ever get from it; and WHEREAS,

If I have been brought up in luxury and the expectation of being Uncle John's heir, so that I never did a stroke of work in my life, and never mean to if I can help it; and WHEREAS,
I am a sensible person, and take you to be the same, and I am sure no sensible person, in this enlightened age of our Lord, will throw away half a million of money for a mere idea, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that if you will change your name (whatever it may be) to Brown, that name is to my service; and let me add that if you can marry me, I shall fully appreciate the great honor you will do me. Mr. Moniton assures me that you are a beautiful and accomplished lady. I am sure he can say of me that I am a gentleman, and I honestly believe that I should make you at least a tolerable husband.

Respectfully yours,
JOHN BROWN.

MISS JANE BANCROFT TO MR. JOHN BROWN.

DEAR SIR: Your letter is received and your proposition accepted, with this proviso—that you and I shall never see each other, either before or after marriage. The ceremony can, I presume, take place in a perfectly dark room, and immediately thereafter you can go your way and I can mine. Thus (to speak plainly) each of us can get the money we want, and the only inconvenience about it will be the fact that neither of us can marry again while the other lives. If you accept this condition, I would wish that the affair be terminated as soon as possible, and I would like it to be kept as private as may be. I shall retain my maiden name, and do not sign it here, as I think it just as well for you to remain in ignorance of it.

Truly yours,

MR. JOHN BROWN,
14 Westchester Place.

A fortnight after this strange correspondence, the two parties met by arrangement at the town mansion of Mr. Marmaduke Moniton, were married exactly as the lady's letter had prescribed, and immediately thereafter Mr. Brown left the city, congratulating himself upon having saved himself a fortune without to any great extent sacrificing his liberty; yet wondering now and then what manner of woman it was who had stood up beside him in the shadow at that gloomy marriage, and what kind of a face and form was hidden beneath the long, thick veil. However, as he had promised Mr. Moniton upon his honor to make not the slightest effort to discover even the name of his unknown bride, being very much of a philosopher, he presently dismissed the subject from his mind, and soon after almost forgot it entirely.

Half a dozen years spent in the great capitals of Europe rather improve any man, and they did a good deal for John Brown. At the time of his strange marriage he was just of age—good-looking enough, but immature, conceited, impulsive and reckless—in short, a character unformed, but capable of much good if properly turned. These years in Europe, as I say, did a good deal for him. He came back to New York, at last, a fine-looking, polished, well-informed man of the world; and quite a lion he found himself just then, too, for somehow or other it had gotten into the papers how he had jumped overboard after a young lady (a young lady of some sixty odd summers if the truth were known) on the voyage home.

And since he was rich and distinguished, he was at once smiled upon by all the managing man-mas and marrying daughters in town, for you see the dog took good care they should not know he was married. He understood too well his value as a supposed unexceptionable parti.

One of the first questions asked him at a certain club which he had joined, was: "Did he know Miss Bancroft?" Who the deuce was Miss Bancroft? Why, the finest woman in America, rich as Rothschild, and handsome as Hebe, a kind of blonde-brunette, you know—eyes black as night, and hair beautiful as the day—you will know her fast enough, the first time you see her. Just fall in with the rest of us—we're all in her train.

And, sure enough, that was just what our hero did. He saw her first at the Wallingford reception, danced with her as often as she would let him that very first evening; and went home desperately in love, buried his face in his hands, and for the first time in all those years really felt the chains that bound him. He knew, at last, what many a man comes to know too late, that he has met the woman who, whatever else she might be, was to him "the one fair woman beneath the sun," and to possess whom he would have given up wealth, position, even honor itself—for passionate men do love that way sometimes.

As he paced his room in the moonlight that night, bitterly did he repent what he now felt to be the mistake of his life. How different would his feelings have been had he known that this woman whom he loved was the same who had put her hand in his six years before and become his wife.

But, while John Brown never dreamed that the beautiful Miss Bancroft was his wedded wife, she was perfectly well-aware of the fact. When she married him she was a poor, unpretending girl, helping her widowed mother eke out a slender support. For her mother's sake alone, she had accepted the conditions of the will; but, disliking John from the tone of his letter, and feeling that she was not calculated to inspire anything but a similar feeling in return, she had replied as we have seen. But, half a dozen years of prosperity had made of the feeble girl a splendid woman, and success in society had taught her her own power. And so, when she had learned of John Brown's return to America, lonely and without a relation in the world as she now was, there came over her an irresistible longing to know her husband, and with it a half-formed resolve, born of the woman within her, to try her power upon him and win his love. So she had come to New York, met him and loved him, yet, still uncertain of his feelings toward her, faint to think sometimes from the light that shone upon her and her alone from his dark eyes, that his love was hers, yet, knowing that he held himself not a free man, half-fearing that he was but trifling with her.

One night, on the passionate waves of the beautiful waltz they floated out together under an open door to a rose-hung, moonlit veranda, and there with the spell of the music and the flashing lamps, and the scent of the roses strong upon him, suddenly, without one word of warning, he bent over her, and taking her in his arms he whispered the words he had whispered a thousand times in his life before, but never truly until now. "I love you." Then feeling the cool night breeze sweep over him, and suddenly realizing fully his position, he stood erect again with folded arms before her. Her head was bent low and he could not see the joy in her face.

"Miss Bancroft," he said, huskily, "I beg your pardon. Even if you loved me as I do you I have no right to say what I have. It seems to me I do not care to live without you, and yet if I stay where you are a day longer, I shall forget that I am a gentleman."

And suddenly, before she could cry out or prevent him, he had turned away and disappeared in the darkness. She sat a moment, unable to realize that the happiness she had waited for so long had suddenly fled from her. The words had been upon her very lips which would assure him that she was already his. She rose and stretched out her arms toward him, but he was already out of hearing. Then, with a faint cry, she sunk down lifeless among the rose-leaves, and there they found her presently, and took her in to a chamber and in the morning, when the physicians came and found

her weak and delirious, they said that her life was hardly to be hoped for.

John Brown left town early that morning for the Pacific slope. Forty-eight hours after, arrived at Chicago, he found a message waiting for him at the Palmer House—a few terrible words, that had left New York since he had, and reached here before him. The message was from Mr. Moniton, and the words were these:

"Your wife is dying. If you care to see her in this world, come back at once."

Will any one think less of John Brown if I say that, as he read these words his heart gave a throb of joy? Was he not at once free—free to marry Jennie Bancroft? But he thoughtless of himself for it, and the next instant blushed for very shame. Here was the woman he had never cared for at all, scarcely thought of all these years, dying—and did he owe her nothing—she who was his wife? Of course he would go back. Of course he cared to see her in this world—see her, and ask her pardon for his indifference; for in this hour, when he knew she was dying, he felt that he might have acted differently and more generously than he had. So he turned once more back to the city where he had left Jennie Bancroft—back to where his wife lay dying—perhaps, ere this, dead.

Mr. Moniton was waiting for him at the ferry with a carriage, and led the way to it at once. A strange expression in his face caused John to halt and look at him.

"How is she?" he asked, a little hoarsely.

"Is she—dead?"

"Dead? Not by a long shot. She's in a ticklish condition, though. But the doctors say your coming will help her as nothing else can."

"Does she care anything for me, then?"

The old man chuckled heartily as he replied: "Care for you? I should think she did. Why, it was love for you that put her into a brain fever. Just you come along and see."

Not a word more was said. They drove rapidly along, John silent and moody. His thoughts were constantly of Jennie Bancroft, yet he tried to put her away out of his mind, for he knew that to think of her at such a time was base treason toward that other woman whom he had married long years ago. Presently they came to a stop, and the door was opened. John stepped out, and was surprised to find himself before the Wallingford mansion—the very house he had left so suddenly a few nights before. Mr. Moniton followed and hurried up the steps into the door already opened to receive them.

"How is Miss Bancroft?" asked Mr. Moniton of the servant.

"She grows brighter all the time," was the answer.

John heard it all, but did not understand. Miss Bancroft! Was she sick, too? He went up the broad staircase like a man in a dream, and then suddenly he found himself in a room where there were several people whose faces he seemed to know and yet not to know, gathered about a sick bed—and on that bed—could he believe his eyes!—was the woman he loved—the woman he had kissed and turned away from, pale and languid, yet beautiful as he had ever seen her. But not until she put out her arms to him, not until she cried out, "Oh, John, do you not understand? I am your wife," did he comprehend it all. Then he stepped forward and bent over her once more; and life all at once seemed strange and beautiful to him, as it had never seemed before.

THE WOOLING 'T.

BY HENRI MONTCALEM.

The flush of sunrise was in the sky;
Breezes of morning came sweeping by;
The dew was fresh on bush and brake;
The birds and the flowers were wide awake;
And I asked my lady to name the day,
But she only laughed and ran away.

The air was still; in the noonday sky
Slowly the white clouds drifted by.
We sat together, ill at ease,
On the rustic seat 'neath the linden trees.
I asked my lady to name the day,
But she only answered a pettish "Nay."

The moon was climbing the eastern sky;
Breezes of evening came lipping by;
And love seemed o'ertaking everywhere
As we two sat by the river there.
I asked my lady to name the day,
And she softly said, "Well, have your own way."

The Tramp Ashore:

OR,
DAYBREAK IN A HINDOO VILLAGE.

BY YAM.

"Come, Ed; it is no use trying to sleep. These infernal musketoes are thicker than flies around a molasses barrel, and I am tired of sitting here, so I vote we go ashore and take a stroll."

Jack and I had been sitting on a spare top-mast for four hours, smoking incessantly and making war on the musketoes. Our hands, necks and faces were beginning to swell from innumerable punctures and one of Jack's eyes was completely closed.

"Just the cheese, my dear fellow! Why didn't we think of it before?" I cried, as we both arose.

For a week past the thermometer had denoted 110° and 112° in the shade during the afternoons.

It was utterly impossible to sleep in our cabin, for the roaches had eaten holes through our musketo-curtains and amused themselves by running over our faces, and occasionally we would wake up with a feeling of intense disgust to find one examining the quality of ivory of which our teeth were composed.

We then slung our hammocks on deck under the boats or awnings, but it was no use; the musketoes were worse than the roaches, and we had decided to walk the deck and smoke all night in preference to passing the night either in the cabin or hammocks.

This could not last long, however. On duty all day and walking the deck all night for three or four nights successively was more than human nature could bear, and, as a last resource, we had determined to lay around on the spars and trust to the influence of the narcotic weed and our own vigilance to keep them at bay. It was too monotonous, and when Jack proposed a trip on shore I roused myself with a sense of relief.

"No-o-o-ow, Boxo!" bailed Jack.

No reply. Boxo was snugly ensconced under his "copenas," which, having unwound from his loins, he improvised into a sheet and covered himself from top to toe.

"Ho, you dingy wallah!" I cried, throwing a cocoanut into the boat.

"Shah!" and Boxo's dark face revealed itself from beneath the folds of his covering.

"Dol arime, canara jagger." (Two men go ashore.)

Lazily rousing himself and crew of two men, Boxo at length came alongside and we walked down the gangway-ladder, into the boat.

It was four o'clock—the day just breaking. In five minutes we grounded and were carried ashore on the shoulders of the two coolies, the mud being up to their knees.

Upon landing we turned our faces toward Kidrapore, a Hindoo village some five miles from Calcutta.

As we passed the huts dogs would bark and growl but were too lazy to rise from the mats upon which they lay, in front of the huts.

The chokadores, or native policemen, would occasionally challenge us—from a respectful distance—and demand to know why we were abroad at that hour.

They assumed an air of indifference, however, upon the mere request of Jack "to go to the devil."

In some of the huts were heard the beat of tom-toms, revelry and songs chanted in a low, monotonous tone.

The Hindoo bathes perhaps four or five times a day, but eats only before sunrise and after sunset. His only mid-day refreshment is a smoke and drink of water.

At about five o'clock the natives began to rise, and we saw men, women and children enjoying their morning bath.

Walking down to the river, they would walk in, knee deep, and then take off their only article of apparel, the copers, which they would fold into a turban, and then plunge boldly into the river.

"These fellows are almost amphibious," said Jack. "They are as much at home under water as on land."

"Yes, they never drown unless stuck in the mud," I replied. "But, come and see them eat."

Under a tall coco-nut tree we perceived a fire, upon which was a large iron pot, and walking up to it, we stood and watched the operation of cooking the curried rice.

The cook appeared much dissatisfied at our curiosity and want of delicacy, so we moved on in search of another fire.

We soon found one, and also saw some ten or twelve Hindoos squatting around it.

In the middle of them was a large copper vessel, called a "chattie," filled with excellently cooked rice—the color perfectly white and each kernel large and dry; it really looked tempting.

They commenced to eat just as we arrived, and, fearful of disturbing them, Jack proposed we should get under the lee of a banana tree, near by.

They had neither fork, spoon nor plate, but each dipped the thumb and first two fingers into the rice, and carried quite a respectable quantity to their mouth.

There were perhaps ten pounds of rice cooked, and it was astonishing to see the quantity that each one ate.

Fish and fruit were eaten sparingly with it; after which the pipe, or "hubblebubble," is lighted by the head of the family, and after he has taken a few whiffs—not more than five or six—he passes it to his eldest son, and so to his mother. The pipe is always passed with the sun—that is, from east to west.

"I wish they would cook our 'strike-me-blind' as carefully and skillfully on board ship, as these folks do," said Jack, for he was very partial to curried rice—and we had it each day for tiffin and dinner.

It was now almost sunrise, and we retraced our steps.

On our way back we saw a peculiar sight. Some over-drowsy natives had just entered the river to take their bath. When the sun arose in all its oriental splendor, immediately they bowed down and backed out of the water, then falling upon their knees, saluted repeatedly, while at the same time they pronounced their prayers.

One or two, more pious than the rest, saluted with both hands to forehead, and then, bending forward, rested their heads and hands upon the bare earth.

It was not a very graceful sight, and Jack said it reminded him of the pelican who hides his beak in the earth and whistles Yankee Doodle.

We were on board again by seven o'clock.

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FISHING.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Of all the myriad moods of mind
Which through the heart go a-swishing,
There's none so lazy-like, or kind,
Or full of dreams as fishing.
The fish we long for that we see
For one transcendent moment—
The nibble proves our hope to be
Despairingly ill-founded.

We sit at one end of the pole
With eye fixed on the other;
The past no longer frets the soul,
The future does not bother.
We sit like Patience on a stone,
Coat-tail in water pent,
And as our painted cork goes down
Our hopes are in ascendant.

Our world lies in the water dim,
The sphere of all our wishes;
Around our baited limerick swim
Oh, what impossible fishes!
All ready, ast to turn and bite,
Why do they not begin it?
We'll have a seven-pounder tight
In just another minute!

In "just another minute" lies
The charm of all our fishing,
For what is it, tell me, ye wise,
But waiting and but wishing?
This is a telegraph, in fine,
In spite of all your quibbles:
How flash along that thrilling line
The veriest jerks and nibbles!

And as the line goes running out,
If not asleep, we brighten,
And take the hook with no doubt
And dream it is no light one.
Of all the mystic moods of mind
Which do develop fishing,
There's none so doubtful or so blind
As on a log-a-fishing.

Adrift on the Prairie:

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF FOUR YOUNG NIMRODS.

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "IDAHO TOM,"
"HAPPY HARRY," ETC., ETC.

VI.—ON SWAN LAKE—JIM'S SUCCESS AND LOSS.

FROM our feet the plain seemed to slope gradually away beyond the power of vision, broken into undulations like ocean billows. Behind us lay the glimmering waters of Wall Lake sparkling and radiant as a bed of molten silver. Before us on the bosom of the plain reposed the little sheet known as Swan Lake. A range of low bluffs stood guard along its shores, mirroring their rugged brows in its depths night and morning when the shadows were longest. A belt of yellow reeds, resembling a border of bronze, fringed the margin of the water.

The surface of this lake was dotted and checkered with life—with living, moving creatures of different kinds and colors. Geese, ducks, brants, swans and pelicans sported on the crystal waves and ruffled their plumage in the golden sun along the shore.

It was a sight sufficient to satisfy the most extravagant desire. We feasted our eyes upon it. The lake was but a mile distant. We became inspired with renewed feelings of joy, for we believed we had at last discovered the hunter's paradise of the North-west.

Other objects were soon brought to our view. Away off to the north-east was a body of timber, and on its margin stood a dozen or more small, conical structures, from the apex of which wreaths of white smoke were curling. We knew at a glance what they were—the wigwags of the Musquakie Indians spoken of by Uncle Lige. The tribe, or a portion of it, had come down from their reservation in an adjoining county to spend the season hunting, fishing and begging. We had nothing to fear of them unless it was loss by theft, for they were scientific thieves.

We could see, from our position on the hill, several warriors stalking about in flaming red blankets, smoking their morning pipes; while the squaws engaged in their usual drudgery about camp.

Far away to our right we could see a dark line running across the plain black and ominous.

"That," said old Lige, pointing it out, "is Purgatory Slough. The grass in it's black as a Dutch nigger. Hell's beyond it a mile or two. But, if we get into the deer-range, we'll head the swamps and tharby git through dry-shod. Come, gee up thar, Buck and Bright—g'lang!" and the team moved on.

We crossed the plain to the lake, where we unloaded the canoe and pushed on a mile or two further to reach a good camping-ground. This we found on the edge of the timber about half a mile from the Indian encampment.

Our presence soon became known to the noble red-men, and a deputation of about a dozen awaited on us in our new camp.

They were a remarkable band of gentlemen. All were of the same dirty, copper color, with low, retreating foreheads, broad, sensual faces and black, ferret-like eyes. Either a red or blue blanket covered the broad, square shoulders of each. Their hair was long, black and unkempt. Their heads were surmounted with some relics of civilization, either an old cap or brimless hat doing duty thereon. One low, heavy-set fellow sported a silk "plug" some what the worse of long usage. Being a little too large it pitched gracefully back and set jauntily upon his ears, giving him an expression both comical and ludicrous. He appeared to be a kind of dandy, for he sported a heelless boot and an ancient cloth gaiter, in addition to a pair of pants and a woolen shirt.

Uncle Lige entered into conversation with them in their own vernacular, but when he found they could speak English fluently the conversation was carried on in that tongue for our benefit. After conversing with them on various subjects, he asked:

"What you Ingins doin' down here, anyway?"

"Hunt some—trap some—fish some—git fire-water—have heap gobs of fun like white brudder."

"Goin' to hunt any to-day?"

"Hunt some, mebbey. Some braves go up to pale-face town to git fire-water—then have big, good time—hoop-la-loo!" and the Indian executed a demi-vault that completely astonished us.

"He means 'miraculous' when he says 'fire-water,'" said Jim, aside to George.

"I presume so," replied the latter, "and if they find out you have some in the wagon, you'll be apt to find out how the water tastes up in this country, for they'll have your 'miraculous'."

After lounging round camp an hour or more the Indians returned to their own lodges; and, leaving Uncle Lige to guard our camp, we took our guns and set out for the lake. Reaching our canoe we dragged it through the grass and reeds to the water's edge, and, launching it, embarked for the interior of the broad belt of reeds that fringed the margin of the water. We were unable to get through the dense dry reeds without creating considerable noise, which alarmed the game, and soon the air above us

was filled with screaming fowls—darting and whirling, soaring and circling in every direction.

When we had got through the reeds into the open lake we discovered that our canoe had sprung a leak, and was fast filling, with two fathoms of water beneath us. Being provided with rubber boots we were enabled to keep our feet dry for the time being. George and I set to work bailing out the boat with our hands. We worked diligently but gained but little on the water, which fact disheartened George and rendered him uneasy and fretful.

"Boys," he finally remarked, wringing the water from his hands, "this is too confounded thin for me; take me ashore and I'll remain there."

We saw that George was in solemn earnest, and so we headed the boat back toward shore and landed him. We then drew the boat out onto dry land, emptied it and caulked the leak, when we again put out into the lake, George firing a parting salute—at a black-bird—as we pushed away, leaving him alone upon shore.

"Glad to get rid of him," said Jim, "for it would just have been his blundering luck to have brought down a swan at first shot. I'll take the lead now, for George being the only one possessed of luck, leaves the field clear to old science, and that's me."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when bang went Bob's gun, and a duck came plunging down so close to the prow of the boat where Jim sat, that a shower of water was dashed up in his face.

"How is that for luck, Old Science?" I asked.

"Ugh—thunder!" Jim exclaimed, mopping the water out of his face with his sleeve, "anybody could do that; but I won't shoot at anything less than a goose, pelican or swan. Them's my picking, boys, and whenever you hear old Stub-and-Twist sneeze out epizootically, score at least ten for me—Old Science."

We reached the open water, and pushed across its silent bosom about sixty rods, when we came to a little clump of tall reeds in which we concealed ourselves. From this point, which was rather a central location, we had an extended view in all directions, and at once opened a deadly fire upon the birds gliding around us; at least, Bob and I did, for nothing but ducks had yet ventured within gunshot.

The latter came so near us, at times, that we could distinguish their wild, keen eyes, hear the winnow of their wings, and see the green and gold upon them. There was nothing in the innocent fowls' presence, however, to appeal to our better natures—to cause us to desert from the sport of killing them. We felt that it was one of the privileges bestowed upon us by a benign Providence, and we lost no time in moralizing over the fact.

Jim doggedly reserved his charges for large game, in the very face of our splendid success, that was piling up score after score against him. Suddenly, however, silence was imposed upon us by our big companion, who had discovered a number of white swans coming directly toward us. They were flying very slowly, and there was nothing to prevent a successful shot, should they not be alarmed and turn aside before they came to us.

We gave way to Jim, since he had waited so patiently for a shot, and as the huge birds came nearer, the click of his gunlocks was heard; then the muzzle of his weapon was thrust upward through the reeds; his face dropped against the breech, and his eyes glanced along the barrel. These movements were instantly followed by a thunderous crash that caused our canoe to rock on the waves.

A way across the plain rolled the prolonged boom of the gun—to and fro its echoes rebounded from shore to shore.

We lifted our eyes upward as the stunning report crashed out, and saw a bird thrust its head upward with a frightful scream. It flapped its great, white wings rapidly, as if struggling hard to keep upon its flight. But a scarlet stream trickled across its snowy breast, it reeled upon the air, then shot suddenly downward like an arrow, falling in a narrow belt of reeds about fifty paces from us.

"There!" exclaimed Jim, with an imposing air of triumph, as he coolly proceeded to load his gun, "who scores the big points now? Luck or Science? You fellows have been boasting of your success all day, and yet you have done nothing but pop down a few little ducks. And now I have a swan—a pure, snow-white swan, and an almighty big fellow he is, too. There's some finance in such game as that, boys. You know swan's down is the most valuable commodity of the kind found in America, and that skin lying right out yonder will bring me at least twenty dollars. Look through here, boys, and get your eyes accustomed to the dazzling sight by degrees. Do you not perceive it, Robert? Do you not behold it, Oliver? Who says it don't pay to hold your fire for big game? Miraculous! I'll show you how to score fine points from this on. I want it understood that when 'Stub-and-Twist' speaks, it will be on the money question—the inflation of currency in her owner's pockets. Now, Bob, steer the boat directly toward that snow-bank out yonder, and I'll put something in this concern that'll make your eyes water."

Bob, who was at the stern, paddled out of the stalks and across toward the strips of reeds in which the swan lay. A few vigorous strokes carried the boat alongside the reeds, within arm's reach of the great, white bird.

"Boys, look! behold! perceive it!" exclaimed Jim, beside himself with delight. "Just think what a prize is mine—fully six feet from tip to tip of wing, is that bird, and oh, such a coat of down it will yield! It'd be big enough and grand enough to make a cloak for a princess, and now, if you'll balance the boat, I'll reach out and haul in the prize."

He leaned over the side of the boat, and just as he was reaching out for the prize, he saw a dusky hand thrust into the reeds from the opposite side and seize the bird. The next instant his prize had vanished as if by magic.

The look that mounted to Jim's face, and the single word that accompanied it, chilled us to the marrow. He seized, a paddle, and with a stroke that almost snapped the blade, sent the boat crashing through the reeds; and as we emerged into the open water beyond, we saw a Musquakie Indian, with Jim's bird, in a light canoe, just disappearing around a distant clump of reeds, a deep trail in the water marking the course of his swift-gliding boat.

He came home very late one night, and after fumbling with his latch key a good while, muttered to himself, as he at length opened the door, "I mushmankey noish caush tholoman's asleep." He divested himself of his garments with some trouble, and was congratulating himself on his success as he was getting into bed, when a calm, clear, cold voice sent a chill down his spinal column: "Why, my dear, you ain't going to sleep in your hat, are you?"

Geraldine's Husband.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

THE frosty sunshine of a mid-January day came in between the purple velvet curtains of the grand salon in Mrs. Blythe Bellingham's Fifth avenue mansion, and made a warmly golden halo around little Geraldine Vane's head, that was drooped so lowly over her book that Mrs. Bellingham could not note the effect of her ardent, congratulating words.

"You're a perfect little darling, Geraldine! I do declare, I never would have given you credit for such skill. Only think, child, you haven't been two months from the country, on your visit here, and already had an offer from Mr. Victor Halsey! Why, Gerry, I'm as proud as if you were my daughter instead of my niece!"

The little fair hands were nervously writhing around a cluster of moss-roses Geraldine had cut in the greenhouse—dainty pink roses, the very hue of the girl's sweet cheeks, that were such exquisite contrast to the dusky eyes and wavy, sunny-brown hair; and Mrs. Bellingham looked down at the lissem, willowy figure and smiled and nodded her head astutely.

"I might have known how it would be—youth and freshness and wildness shyness are sure to win the day, and Mr. Victor Halsey is just the man to appreciate such sweetness. Geraldine, I am really charmed with you. Your uncle and I will give you your wedding, and won't Laura Desmond expire with envy when the engagement comes out! Why, my dear, she has fished for Mr. Halsey in the most disgusting manner, and—"

The drooping, girlish head suddenly lifted itself, and the grave, tender eyes looked timidly, pleadingly at the lady's earnest, animated face.

"Oh, aunt Helen—don't talk any more about it, please don't! You are altogether mistaken—I only said Mr. Halsey had asked me to marry him, but I did not say I had accepted him!"

Mrs. Bellingham shook her head approvingly.

"Of course you did not say you had accepted Mr. Halsey, child, and I admire your modest reticence. Of course you did not say so, but I know you did, as no girl in the possession of her senses would do otherwise. A couple of hundred thousand dollars, and a life of regal luxury and pleasure don't come more than once in a lifetime. Geraldine, I declare I think you are really to be envied!"

The moss-rose pink deepened almost to crimson on the girl's cheeks; then, a little gleam of defiance crept into her dark eyes, and one saw then that Geraldine Vane was perfectly capable of holding her own.

"But, aunt Helen, you are entirely mistaken. I did refuse Mr. Halsey."

A gleam like liquid fire was in Mrs. Bellingham's fine eyes.

"Geraldine! refused him—refused Mr. Victor Halsey! And why, may I ask?"

"Because I do not love him; because I love Harry Custer."

Then she looked up, bravely, not boldly, with a little challenging light in her eyes.

Mrs. Bellingham gasped the name in a horrified echo.

"Harry Custer! Harry Custer—Mr. Halsey's unacknowledged nephew! Harry Custer, with not a means of support in the world beyond his pittance as bookkeeper! What do you mean by such nonsense—such insanity?"

"You wouldn't have me marry a man I care nothing about, would you, aunt Helen? Surely you wouldn't have me marry one man and be all the while loving another?"

Mrs. Bellingham bridled.

"The idea of your talking on such a subject! As if a child of your age knows who, or what they like. I shall write at once to your poor mother, Geraldine, and inform her fully of your willfulness, and tell her to expect you home within a week."

Geraldine's color flamed, then ebbed.

"Very well; if you choose to turn me out of your house because I refused a rich man, old enough to be my father, I will be glad to go. Mamma never will be cruel enough to blame me, or papa either."

But when, forty-eight hours later, there came a thick letter from home, with two stamps on the envelope, and directed in papa's finest hand-writing, Geraldine knew there had been an upsurge home, by the way the down strokes were mercilessly shaded—when that twelve-page letter came, that was implorations and reproaches, and sharp scoldings and threatenings, and appeals and wrathful fault-findings, brave little Geraldine felt that she must have done a very terrible thing indeed.

"But, I'll stand firm and true to Harry, come what may, unless—unless mamma positively forbids my marrying him. If they only knew him, they never would blame me for loving him so—and to think mamma always made such a point of her marrying papa for nothing but love!"

Which was perfectly true; only, since that happy day,—nearly twenty years ago—there had come a large family and great cares, and not the least financial luck in the world, to Mr. and Mrs. Vane. And, of late years, the supreme ambition of Mrs. Vane's life had been to marry her two daughters to rich men; so that it was little wonder then when Mrs. Bellingham had announced the ignominious failure of the visit she had invited Geraldine to make, and to secure which invitation Mrs. Vane had angled for months, and to pay which visit had been to deprive the rest of the family of many things in order that Geraldine might go in reasonable style, it was little wonder that the Vane's lamented, and were indignant, and sent a furious letter to the stupid, ungrateful girl, forbidding her return home until she came prepared to obey her aunt's advice.

Mrs. Bellingham smiled with cold satisfaction as Geraldine poured forth her own indignation.

"You will see at length that no one can tolerate such reckless foolishness as you are guilty of, Geraldine! Not even your own mother. Shall it be as she begs, as your father requests, as I insist, if you wish to remain in my house? Come, Geraldine, be sensible, and have done with this young Custer. Consent to accept Mr. Halsey, and I will give you the handsomest suite of rubies in the city; while as Harry Custer's betrothed you can not remain in my house. You have your choice."

Geraldine was very quiet and repressed as she folded away the voluminous letter.

"I do not see what choice I have, Aunt Helen. You have ordered me from your house"—her voice quivered a little—"and my parents forbid my coming home"—this with a sobbing gasp. "Please tell me what remains for me to do but to go out of doors?"

She was so dignified, and determined about it, that Mrs. Bellingham's temper rose in proportion.

"You are a brazen, forward girl, and your

willfulness will be your ruin. I wash my hands of you!"

And, although she did not really mean the threats she had made, in the fullness of her disappointment, nevertheless Geraldine took her at her word, and that self-same evening, as she and her lover were walking along the avenue, she took him into her confidence.

"I don't see whatever in the world I shall do about it, Harry," she said, in the sweet, unconscious way she had that had been such a charm in his eyes.

He pressed her dainty little arm against him lovingly, and looked down in her face, with such tender, reverent pride in his eyes—those dark, splendid eyes of his that had helped win the day against many.

"Can you not suggest a way to cut the Gordian knot, my little darling, or must I do all the thinking?"

"If I knew of any way—" she began, honestly, innocently.

He laughed, joyously.

"What a child you are—and I am so glad! Did it not occur to you that you had agreed to be my little wife, to take me for better, for worse? Geraldine, I will be no better able to make you comfortable and happy in five years than I am now. Shall we be married, and have our own dear home, darling? Will you say 'yes,' Geraldine?"

And when Geraldine went home an hour later, in the pocket of her dress was her marriage certificate, and she knew she had taken on her the sweetest sacred vows that life holds.

She was just a little nervous and agitated as she went into Mrs. Bellingham's library to acquaint that lady with the news she ought to know, and to tell her that on the morrow she would go to her husband's home.

The warm, lovely color was glowing, like carnation blooms, on her cheeks, as Geraldine pushed ajar the library door; the next instant, she was whiter than freshly fallen snow—the rich blood driven back to her heart by the words she had heard spoken, first, in Mrs. Bellingham's wonder-stricken tones; afterward, in a strange voice, a man's hard, unsympathetic voice.

"Killed! Mr. Victor Halsey thrown out of his coupe and killed, since dinner?"

"Yes, Mrs. Bellingham, Mr. Halsey was thrown from his carriage, as I said, not an hour ago, and instantly killed. And he had destroyed his will only this morning."

Geraldine heard Mrs. Bellingham fairly gasp.

"Destroyed his will! Then his nephew is heir to all that immense wealth—Harry Custer owns it all!"

Then Geraldine went in, white, calm, with confining emotions of pity and horror and astonishment and ecstasy at her heart, and laid her marriage certificate on the library table, and watched Mrs. Bellingham read it.

"My niece, Mrs. Custer," is prime favorite with Aunt Helen nowadays; and it is perfectly astonishing how the Vane family became reconciled to Geraldine's match, and with what unblushing audacity they affirm the respect they always had in dear "Gerry's judgment;" while Geraldine herself and her loving husband accept the wealth so providentially bestowed upon them, and are content, as they would have been with only each other.

The True Story of Brown.

BY REEN E. REXFORD.

"I want you to come down and make us a visit, Joseph. Come down next week, and stay till after the Fourth. We're expecting some visitors, and I'm sure you'll have a pleasant time. Now don't fail to come. Katie sends her love, and says I must tell you that we shall expect to see you here next week. Don't disappoint us."

So ended the letter which Joseph Brown received from his brother William, somewhere about the middle of June.

"I can see through it all," said he, folding up the epistle and returning it to its envelope.

"Yes, sir"—to the old Maltese cat, who happened to be fast asleep—"it's clear as day. They've got a woman down there who wants to get married, and they've concluded to make another attempt to hook me in. Oh! you can't fool your brother Joseph yet, Mr. William Brown! I can see through you! You've got your foot into matrimony, and you want me to do just as you did. Misery loves company."

Joseph couldn't have meant by that that he considered his brother had made himself miserable by marrying, for he often envied his brother the comfort he seemed to take with his wife and family. But he had so long considered himself a bachelor for life that he had got into the habit of assuming to himself that married people were envious of single ones, and always spoke of them in a kind of way that implied his pity for them, and his thankfulness that he wasn't in their shoes. While the truth was, he really wished he had a nice little wife. But he was afraid of women, and expected to always remain single. He was quite sure he could never muster up sufficient courage to tell a woman that he loved her, and asked her to be Mrs. Joseph Brown. "The canon's mouth wouldn't scare me," he told himself, when he got to thinking about it, "but a woman would."

The memory of last summer was still fresh in his mind. He had been invited to visit his brother. He had gone down unsuspectingly, and found there an old maid who immediately laid siege to him. But he had succeeded, by the help of Divine Providence, in getting out of the terrible predicament. Now he felt sure that another trap was laid for him. He didn't know why, but he couldn't help feeling so.

"Be it full go," he declared. "I s'pose it's a forty in pantslets, this time. The other one was a girl, I know as well as I want to. I s'pose it would be a good thing if I had a wife, but I don't want a little girl, nor a woman old enough to be her grandmother, and what's more, I won't have 'em!" he added, with so much emphasis that he woke up the old cat, who looked at him in feline wonder.

He went down to his brother's.

"Who is it, this time?" he asked William, as soon as they were on their way home from the depot.

"I don't know what you mean," said his brother.

"It was Miss Larabee, last year," said Joseph.

"This year it must be some one else."

"Oh! I understand now!" laughed William.

"If there's anybody, it must be Mrs. Parks."

"A widow?" gasped Joseph.

"Yes, but a young one," answered his brother.

"Oh!," Joseph couldn't say another word. He felt, in some mysterious way, that it was all up with him. He felt just as sure of it as he was a month afterward.

When he went down to the parlor there were several ladies there, and his heart began to thump and his face to get red before he got over the threshold. It always scared him terribly to be introduced to women. And he felt more frightened than ever now, for she was there.

A very pretty little child was playing in the room. It looked up, saw him, smiled delightfully, and toddling over to him, grabbed him round his shaking knees, and lisped, "Papa! Papa!"

"Oh, Lord!" Mr. Brown couldn't have kept back the frightened exclamation for the world. His face broke out in profuse perspiration, and the ladies began to titter at the child's performance, which, of course made the poor man feel extremely uncomfortable.

"Mrs. Hooper, my brother," said William, presenting him to the first lady they came to. Whereupon he seized her by the hand and gave it a most vigorous shaking, being the only thing he could think of doing. Mrs. Hooper evidently thought he meant to be a very friendly man.

"This is Mrs. Drake," said William, as he succeeded in getting his brother away from Mrs. Hooper.

Joseph attempted to bow, trod on the baby's toes, and came near fainting with fright when the cherub set up a doleful wail.

"And this is Mrs. Parks," finished his brother, indicating the woman who came to the baby's rescue.

As she had her hands pretty well occupied with the baby, he couldn't indulge in hand-shaking, so he bowed several times, said he "hoped she was well, and wished for a better acquaintance," after which he stumbled into the nearest chair, and longed to commit suicide.

William watched his opportunity. When he caught Joseph's eye, he nodded toward the woman with the baby, and whispered, "The widow."

"Good Lord!" thought Joseph. "That's her, is it and she's got a young one! I wouldn't like to be a stepfather, though 'twould save a fellow the trouble of raising one of his own, I s'pose."

"Papa! Papa!" As sure as he lived that "young one" was calling him that "pet name" again, and was insisting on coming to him.

"You musn't mind her," said Mrs. Parks, with the prettiest blush he thought he had ever seen. "She calls almost every gentleman papa since her father died."

"I—I don't mind it if you don't," he managed to answer, at which she blushed prettier than ever.

The child insisted on coming to him. He never felt quite so awkward in his life before, as he did when he climbed up on his knee. He was afraid to touch her. Children and china always seemed to him to be made of the same material. And he knew that the ladies were watching him, and wanted to laugh. He got red as a rose, and felt as if the thermometer had suddenly reached 100° in the shade. Nevertheless he lived through it.

"She's real nice," he declared, to the best of his ability, that being the nearest human in resemblance of anything in his bedroom, when he went to bed that night. "I b'lieve I'd like to marry her, but I darsent ask her." Cold chills ran down his back at the thought.

In less than two days Mr. Joseph Brown was in love. Deeply and sentimentally in love. So much so, in fact, that he picked up a rose he had dropped, and took it up to his room, where he sat and looked at it for an hour before he realized what he was doing.

"You poor old fool!" he said, addressing himself. "You're done, ain't you? It takes widows to fetch a man to time!"

Then he sighed.

During the next two weeks Mr. Brown found the courage to get better acquainted with Mrs. Parks than he had ever been with any woman save his mother. When he thought of asking her to marry him, however, he couldn't help feeling afraid of her.

The Fourth came. Great preparations had been made for it, and all the family and guests were going, with the exception of Mrs. Parks, who said she'd rather stay at home, for Rosie was so much trouble.

Joseph had intended to go, but he suddenly changed his mind, and concluded he'd stay at home.

"Got headache," he explained, gruffly and concisely, to William. He also told the same outrageous fib to Mrs. Parks, who smiled as if she understood all about it, at which Joseph colored up and felt as guilty as a boy who has been caught in mischief.

"Of course I'm sorry you don't feel well," she said, "but I'm glad I'm going to have company. It would be terribly lonesome here alone. We'll have a nice little dinner, all to ourselves, and that'll be almost as pleasant as a picnic."

"More so," answered Mr. Brown. "A great deal more so."

When the family had taken their departure Mr. Brown went down-town and bought some strawberries and lemons, and other good things, and brought them home for dinner.

"Won't it be jolly?" cried the widow. "I'll hull these berries